

Chapter 1. Introduction to the Responses to Comments

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This volume of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Delta Wetlands Project has been prepared under the direction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The environmental impacts of the Delta Wetlands Project were analyzed in the 1995 Delta Wetlands Project Draft Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement (1995 DEIR/EIS) and the 2000 Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement for the Delta Wetlands Project (2000 REIR/EIS). This volume of the FEIS has been prepared to provide responses to comments received on those two documents.

As described in Chapter 1 of Volume 1, the 1995 DEIR/EIS was issued by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and USACE, the joint lead agencies under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and NEPA, respectively. The lead agencies circulated the 1995 DEIR/EIS for public review and comment and received numerous comment letters. The SWRCB and USACE directed that some portions of the information and analyses presented in the 1995 DEIR/EIS be revised and recirculated for public review and comment in the 2000 REIR/EIS; the 2000 REIR/EIS included revised information on water supply and operations, water quality, fisheries, levee stability and seepage, and natural gas facilities and transmission pipelines. The lead agencies received several comment letters on the 2000 REIR/EIS.

In responding to comments on a draft EIR/EIS, the lead agencies must respond to:

- # comments received during the initial circulation period that relate to chapters or portions of the document that were not revised and recirculated, and
- # comments received during the recirculation period that relate to the chapters or portions of the earlier EIR/EIS that were revised and recirculated.

Some persons and agencies commented on the portions of the 1995 DEIR/EIS that were recirculated, then commented on the 2000 REIR/EIS analyses of the same issues. In some of these instances, detailed responses are provided in this FEIS only to the later comments.

The remainder of Volume 2 of the FEIS is organized as follows:

- # Chapter 2, “Master Responses: Discussions of Recurring Themes”, presents detailed discussions of several subjects that were raised frequently in comment letters on the 1995 DEIR/EIS and the 2000 REIR/EIS. Each section provides a comprehensive discussion of a subject that was raised in several comments; the discussion serves as a “master response” to those individual comments.

- # Chapter 3, “Comments and Responses to Comments on the 1995 Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement”, contains a list of all agencies and persons who submitted comments on the 1995 DEIR/EIS during the public review period, copies of the comment letters received, and responses to the comments.
- # Chapter 4, “Responses to Comments on the 2000 Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement”, contains a list of all agencies and individuals who submitted comments on the 2000 REIR/EIS during the public review period, copies of the comment letters received, and responses to the comments.
- # Chapter 5, “Citations”, lists supporting references used in the preparation of the responses to comments.
- # The Appendix to the Responses to Comments includes information on endangered species consultation issued after the 2000 REIR/EIS was published, and protest dismissal agreements submitted to the SWRCB. These materials are referred to in the responses to comments.