

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

1416 NINTH STREET, P.O. BOX 942836
SACRAMENTO, CA 94236-0001
(916) 653-5791

**VIA EMAIL**

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

August 27, 2019

AUG 27 2019**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

Mr. Mitch Hardwick
Corning Water District
P.O. Box 738
Corning, CA 96021
h2oman26@gmail.com

RE: Review of Draft Environmental Assessment and Initial Study for Amendment to the Long-Term Renewal Contract Between the United States Bureau of Reclamation and Corning Water District Providing Project Water Service from the Sacramento River for the Purpose of Relinquishing a Portion of the Contract Total Tehama County, California (State Clearinghouse # 2019079114)

Dear Mr. Hardwick,

The California Department of Water Resources (Department) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Assessment and Initial Study (EA/IS) for Corning Water District (Corning) to further reduce its long-term contract amount with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) from 20 to 15 thousand acre-feet (TAF). We understand that in the effort to reduce costs associated with receiving its Central Valley Project water supply, Corning is willing to forgo a portion of its surface water supply and relinquish that amount to Reclamation (page 1-2 of EA/IS). Corning's water users will instead rely on groundwater pumping to meet their water demand.

The Department views the proposed project as being similar to a groundwater substitution transfer. With groundwater substitution transfers, proper monitoring program and mitigation plans are needed to address for potential effects on land subsidence, groundwater drawdown, and ecologically sensitive areas that depend on certain groundwater levels. The Department encourages this type of monitoring and mitigation when groundwater is relied on in lieu of surface water.

In addition, relinquishing surface water supplies and firming up reliance on groundwater could have impacts to the groundwater basin's overall conditions and surface water depletions. The Department encourages Corning to coordinate with the local Groundwater Sustainability Agency that will be implementing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act for the basin.

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For guidance on monitoring program and mitigation plans for groundwater substitution transfers, please see the Draft Water Transfer White Paper, dated December 2015.
[https://water.ca.gov/LegacyFiles/watertransfers/docs/2016 Water Transfer White Paper.pdf](https://water.ca.gov/LegacyFiles/watertransfers/docs/2016%20Water%20Transfer%20White%20Paper.pdf)

Department requests copies of any subsequent environmental documentation related to the project and all legal notices prepared by your district and other partners. Please send future correspondence and questions to:

Nancy Finch, Senior Staff Counsel
Office of the Chief Counsel
Department of Water Resources
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1118
Sacramento, California 94236-0001
(916) 653-6840

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nancy Finch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "F".

Nancy Finch
Senior Staff Counsel