** THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

**700 NORTH ALAMEDA STREET**

**LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012**

 **NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED
NEGATIVE DECLARATION
for the Delta Smelt and Native Species Preservation Project**

**DATE:** February 10, 2023

**TO**: Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, Interested Parties

**LEAD AGENCY**: The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

**PROJECT TITLE**: Delta Smelt and Native Species Preservation Project

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) has prepared a Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Project listed above pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines. Anyone desiring to comment on the Draft IS/MND may do so in writing within the 30-day public review period from Friday, February 10, 2023 through 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 13, 2023. In addition to making the Draft IS-MND available for public review, the document is being sent to responsible, trustee, and interested agencies as part of the review process required under CEQA (Section 21092 of the Public Resources Code) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15072 of the California Code of Regulations).

**PROJECT LOCATION:**

The Proposed Project covers approximately 145 acres across two parcels on a northern portion of Bouldin Island adjacent to State Route 12 (SR 12) in San Joaquin County (Figure 1-1).

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

Metropolitan proposes the construction of two marsh-pond complexes that would house native fish for experimental study. Each marsh-pond complex would consist of a propagation pond, a cooling marsh, and a food marsh that would be constructed in two phases. The first phase is a smaller demonstration pilot, and the second larger phase would capitalize on what was learned in the first phase. The tule marshes would be of varying sizes and serve two distinct functions: the first type of marsh would be designed to optimize cooling of water temperatures (cooling marsh) and the second type would be for production of food for the native fish (food marsh). The propagation ponds would contain the fish and be connected to the cooling and food marshes through screened concrete-lined canals. Research conducted at these ponds would help refine future research on delta smelt and the establishment of a marsh-pond complex that could support delta smelt. This Proposed Project assumes, prior to any transport and stocking of hatchery delta smelt, that fish are available from the Fish Conservation and Culture Laboratory (FCCL) and their release and rearing in the propagation ponds is approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

Pursuant to the requirements of CEQA, an Initial Study was prepared for the Project. The Initial Study describes the environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and concludes that, with the implementation of mitigation measures for biological resources, the Proposed Project will not have a significant effect on the environment. Based on this assessment, a Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS/REVIEW:**

In accordance with Section 15073 of the State CEQA Guidelines, hard copies of the Draft IS/MND are available for public review for 31 days from Friday, February 10, 2023 through 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 13, 2023 at:

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
700 North Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

A copy of the Draft IS-MND will also be posted on Metropolitan’s website at: <https://www.mwdh2o.com/projects-in-your-community/ceqa/>

Please contact Sean Carlson via telephone at (213) 217-6276 or email at EP@mwdh2o.com to make arrangements for viewing the document at Metropolitan’s office or to request a hard copy of the Draft IS/MND if you are not able to access the document online or at the location listed above.

**Contact for Public Comments:** Written comments on the draft IS/MND may be addressed to: Sean Carlson, Environmental Planning Section, The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, PO Box 54153, Los Angeles, CA 90054-0153 or comments may be sent via e-mail to: EP@mwdh2o.com (reference “Smelt Preservation Project” in the subject line). When submitting written comments to Metropolitan, please provide the name and email address of a contact person.

Metropolitan will notify commenters of the date, time, and place of the public meeting at which Metropolitan’s Board of Directors will consider whether to adopt the IS/MND, including comments received during the public review period. Information on how to access the meeting will be found in the meeting agenda published at the following website 72 hours in advance of the meeting - <https://mwdh2o.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>