

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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**VIA-EMAIL**

June 11, 2026

Brian Deason
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Subject: State Clearinghouse #2026050621, 2026 El Dorado Irrigation District
Temporary Reservoir Re-Operation Water Transfer Project – CEQA Initial
Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND)

Dear Mr. Deason,

The Department of Water Resources (Department) has reviewed the Initial
Study/Negative Declaration for El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) Temporary Reservoir
Re-operation Water Transfer Project. The Department has the following comments.

Project Description

Under the 2026 EID Temporary Reservoir Re-Operation Water Transfer Project (Proposed Project), EID would transfer a maximum of 5,000 acre-feet (AF) of water from July through November 2026 to various Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP) Contractor Agencies with water sourced from EID water rights from Weber Reservoir, Silver Lake, and Caples Lake. EID proposes to make the water available by 1) releasing up to 620 AF of transfer water from Weber Reservoir that would have remained in storage in 2026 under a post-1914 water right (License 2184), and/or releasing up to 4,880 AF of water from Silver Lake and Caples Lake under pre-1914 water rights (Statement 015941 and Statement 004708, respectively).

Under the existing operations, releases from Caples and Silver Lakes are added to storage in Jenkinson Lake or used directly to meet summer/fall 2026 consumptive demands. Under the Proposed Project, the existing consumptive demands would be met with water previously stored in Jenkinson Lake in lieu of using water from Caples and Silver Lakes. This re-operation would allow the water stored in Caples and Silver Lakes to be released for transfers to buyers.

The Proposed Project would result in the temporary decreased storage of up to 620 AF in Weber Reservoir and up to 4,880 AF in Jenkinson Lake which could potentially result in an increased inflow of up to 5,500 AF into Folsom Reservoir. No new facilities are required to be constructed to facilitate this proposed transfer.

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Comments

Chapter 2 Project Description

2.1 Project Overview and 2.4 Proposed Project

Although the proposed transfer volume not to exceed 5,000 AF are listed in Section 2.1, Project Overview, and Section 2.4, Proposed Project, it is worth noting that the summation of “up to 620 AF available from Weber Reservoir and up to 4,880 AF combined available from Caples and Silver Lakes” results in 5,500 AF maximum available transfer volume. This comment letter states 5,500 AF (the actual available transfer volume) as the potential increased inflow into Folsom Reservoir in the Project Description section above. The IS/ND Chapter 2, Project Description, needs to change the maximum available transfer volume from 5,000 AF to 5,500 AF update so Chapter 2 states accurately the available water for transfer.

In addition, these two Sections further explain that the proposed project’s releases from Weber Reservoir and Caples and Silver lakes would be coordinated with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the Department for CVP and SWP water system operations, respectively. For transfers from Weber Reservoir, EID is seeking from the State Water Resources Control Board a temporary (1 year or less) change in Place of Use and Point of Rediversion (PORD) pursuant to EID Water Right License 2184 (Application 1692) and consistent with the California Water Code Sections 1725-1732. The proposed PORD would add the SWP Banks pumping plant as a PORD. Section 2.4.4 Absent an Approved Transfer explains EID’s plans for the proposed transfer water should state and federal approvals be completed.

2.6 Regulatory Requirements, Permits and Approvals

The IS/ND describes the Department and Reclamation in 2.6 as agencies that may have approval or review authority over portions of the proposed project. Specifically, the IS/ND explains that conveyance agreements would be needed between EID and the buyers of the transfer water in coordination with Reclamation or the Department depending on which SWP and CVP facilities are utilized to facilitate the transfer. This proposed EID drawdown of Weber Reservoir and Jenkinson Lake storage for meeting transfer objectives would result in a lower than planned end-of-season storage absent the transfer and would require a refill agreement.

The Department agrees with EID’s determination that a refill agreement is needed, as the water vacated from Weber Reservoir and Jenkinson Lake for this transfer may impact the water rights and operations of the SWP and CVP. The Department requests that all coordination is with both the Department and Reclamation, independent of which SWP and CVP facilities are utilized to facilitate the transfer. The refill agreement would

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include conditions, criteria, and procedures to account and mitigate injuries to SWP and CVP operations from future EID refill following the release of the transfer water, and both the Department and Reclamation would be signatories to any refill agreement. The Department requests that any order approving EID's temporary change contain a term requiring a signed and executed refill agreement with both the Department and Reclamation.

3.4.2 Discussion of Water Transfer Effects on Caples and Silver Lakes and Weber Reservoir Releases

Tables 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3 in Section 3.4.2 present the potential transfer release patterns for Caples and Silver Lakes and Weber Reservoir, respectively. These tables include the monthly historical maximum, minimum, and average release rates for each lake, along with the proposed transfer release flow rates. To provide accurate information for the impact analyses, the December release flows for without and with transfer conditions are outside of the transfer period and need to be removed from the Tables. If the removal of the December releases changes an impact analysis conclusion or mitigation measures, the impact analysis is flawed and will need to be re-done.

In addition, it is important to provide the breakdown of the approximate daily average flow rates for minimum releases, discretionary releases, and transfer releases in Tables 3-1 and 3-2. This breakdown will ensure that the cumulative volume of releases over the transfer period are sufficient to not exceed the maximum transfer volumes identified in the Project Description (620 acre-feet from Caples Lake and 4,880 acre-feet from Silver Lake). Absent this information, the document is insufficient to inform the public and decision makers of necessary information on potential impacts of the project.

3.19 Utilities and Service Systems impact analysis and 3.19.2 Discussion

For 3.19.2(b), the IS/ND concludes a less than significant impact. The discussion explains that EID would enter into the refill/conveyance agreements with the Department and Reclamation, as appropriate, for Weber Reservoir and Jenkinson Lake with conditions acceptable to all parties to ensure the proposed project would have minimal or no effect on EID's ability to meet future water demand obligations. EID should ensure that with executed refill agreements with the Department and Reclamation, the impacts would remain less than significant.

To improve coordination and to facilitate the transfer of the latest information, the Department requests that EID submit a complete transfer proposal using the Department's Water Transfers Information Management System online database at <https://info.water.ca.gov/wtims/>.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on this proposed project. If

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you have any questions or need additional information, please contact SWP staff at SWPWaterTransfers@water.ca.gov

Sincerely,

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