



Update on Key Salton Sea Issues and Activities

Background

The Commission was previously briefed on Salton Sea issues and restoration activities in May 2013 and requested a follow-up presentation.

- Since that time, Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency John Laird certified the Final EIR/EIS of the Salton Sea Species Conservation Habitat Project, a pilot project to provide a range of aquatic habitats that will support fish and wildlife species dependent on the Salton Sea. Design of the Project will provide feeding, resting, and breeding habitat for birds, particularly migratory fish-eating birds whose habitat is deteriorating quickly as the Sea recedes and becomes saltier.
- In February, Sen. Barbara Boxer and two southern California House members, Reps. Raul Ruiz and Juan Vargas, urged the U.S. Interior Department to make it easier to set up renewable-energy projects as part of a broader restoration plan for the Salton Sea. In a letter to Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, the lawmakers endorsed a plan to use revenue derived from renewable-energy projects at or near the Sea to pay for environmental restoration and help communities in the region.
- The Interior Department and the Salton Sea Authority also signed a memorandum of understanding that will serve as the foundation for continued federal, state and local cooperation over restoration plans.
- Grant agreements between the state and three applicants for the Salton Sea Financial Assistance Program (US Fish and Wildlife Services, the Imperial Irrigation District/Sephton Water Technology, and the Salton Sea Authority/Torres Martinez Tribe) are nearing completion. The projects were chosen to meet the Salton Sea Restoration Program goals and objectives. Completed projects will generate data to further refine and advance the Salton Sea Restoration Program.

At the March 19 meeting, Mr. Keali'i Bright, Deputy Secretary for Legislation at the California Natural Resources Agency, will update the Commission on recent activities.

Mr. Phil Rosentrater, Deputy Director of the Salton Sea Authority, will brief the Commission on Salton Sea restoration and their activities. The Salton Sea Authority is a Joint Powers Authority comprised of the Coachella Valley Water District, the Imperial Irrigation District, Riverside County, Imperial County, and the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians; the Authority's goal is restoration of the Salton Sea.

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