



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is Worth Your Fight?

Worth Your Fight is a joint Modesto Irrigation District (MID) and Turlock Irrigation District (TID) customer awareness campaign devoted to informing our region about the potential negative impacts associated with Phase 1 of the State Water Resources Control Board's Bay-Delta Plan and ways to get involved.

What is the Bay-Delta Plan? And what is the SED?

The Bay-Delta Plan is required by law to be updated every three years by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The goals of the Plan are to identify beneficial uses of water, set water quality objectives for the Bay-Delta and set a program of implementation for achieving those water quality objectives.

The Bay-Delta Plan isn't something we can ignore. It's a state-certified regulatory program with backing from the Governor, the Legislature and the state's regulatory bodies.

In order to analyze the potential impacts of its proposal, a Substitute Environmental Document (SED) has been developed by the SWRCB in lieu of a California Environmental Quality Act Environmental Impact Report. Specifically, the SED is the mechanism that is proposing and analyzing new objectives for the Bay-Delta, as well as identifying potential impacts.

This proposal – which disregards our water rights – would force MID and TID to dedicate 40% of unimpaired flows along the Tuolumne River from February 1 to June 30 annually for fish and wildlife beneficial uses and salinity control.

What do MID and TID already do regarding river flows?

Depending on the type of water year, MID and TID already contribute anywhere from 94,000 acre-feet (dry years) to 301,000 acre-feet (wet years) of water as part existing agreements with the SWRCB and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. This equates to anywhere from 30 billion gallons of water in dry years to about 100 billion gallons in wet years.

How much is 40% unimpaired flows on the Tuolumne River?

MID and TID ran some numbers when the SWRCB originally proposed 35% unimpaired flows three years ago. A 35% unimpaired flow program from February to June annually on the Tuolumne River would make the existing dry-year 94,000 acre-feet requirement rise to 353,000 acre-feet – a 276% increase. The existing wet-year 301,000 acre-feet requirement would rise to approximately 1.37 million acre-feet – a 356% increase. Requiring 40% unimpaired flows would force these amounts to rise even higher.

How does this process relate to the California WaterFix?

State regulators and the Governor's administration claim The Bay-Delta Plan and the California WaterFix are separate and unrelated. However, there is an uncanny relationship in the timing, water volumes, goals, stakeholders and state involvement in these processes.

MID and TID believe that if the SWRCB sincerely wants to do what's right for all affected parties – farmers, municipal users and environmental stakeholders – it would more openly explore all types of options and improvements, not just increased river flows.

Our communities are looking at significant impacts with no evidence that additional water will get where it needs to go or achieve any goals or objectives identified by the state. We will be forced by state regulators to solve larger statewide problems that we didn't create.



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What are the possible impacts of the SED to MID and TID?

MID and TID explored what 2015 would've looked like under the SED's proposed 40% unimpaired flows, and absent already-incurred drought impacts, our region would've lost \$1.6 billion in economic output, \$167 million in farm-gate revenue, \$330 million in labor income and 6,576 jobs. Also, MID and TID farmers would've received no surface water. The SED also threatens our ability to sustainably manage groundwater. The Modesto and Turlock Sub-basins are the only two basins in the San Joaquin Valley that aren't listed in conditions of critical overdraft. With the SED's significantly increased unimpaired flows, our customers will have to rely more heavily on groundwater – this is counter to the goals of Sustainable Groundwater Management Act which shows that groundwater management is a priority for all Californians, especially lawmakers, regulators and the Governor. It additionally jeopardizes disadvantaged communities and Modesto and Turlock drinking water supplies.

I'm not a farmer. Will I even be affected?

Farmers aren't the only customers at risk of harm. As integrated utilities – supplying ag water, drinking water and electricity – any negative impact to one of these services MID and TID provides affects the others.

It's well known that our region is reliant upon agriculture thriving for continued economic stability. The Don Pedro Project supports approximately \$4.1 billion in economic output, \$734.8 million in labor income and 18,900 jobs within the region. And, as groundwater is the predominant supply for most drinking water providers in the region, the water coming out of your tap could be at risk as well. Lack of surface water will lead to less groundwater recharge which will impact the quality and quantity of our groundwater.

Additionally, due to the February to June timing of increased unimpaired flows, hydropower – one of the cheapest and cleanest sources of power – produced by MID and TID at Don Pedro becomes less economical as these are the months when power demand is lowest.

Have MID and TID offered any solutions countering unimpaired flows?

MID and TID have invested more than \$25 million to develop better science and better solutions for the Tuolumne River to address the same concerns that the SWRCB is attempting to solve. This science has allowed us to develop non-flow solutions, such as habitat improvements, river restoration efforts, predation suppression and changing the timing of the existing flow requirements – all solutions that could be implemented now.

What are MID and TID doing to fight this?

MID and TID have been actively following the SWRCB's proposal and have directly provided a great deal of data and information regarding our operations, science and alternative solutions. Not only have we maintained a constant dialogue with the SWRCB, but we have also continued to inform our customers, community members, elected officials and the media on the significant impacts of this proposal and encourage them to voice their concerns. We've created Worth Your Fight to further raise awareness.

What can I do to help?

Join the Worth Your Fight effort. You can speak out against this proposal by signing an e-petition, sending formal comments to the SWRCB, speaking at a future hearing and spreading our message to your friends, family members and colleagues. You can also follow Worth Your Fight on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. For more information on the SWRCB's proposal and ways to get involved, visit worthyourfight.org.