

Waterlines

MAY 2006

The Top California Water Stories of the Month as Compiled by Orange County Water District

Sacramento Bee 5-20-06 - California would be in line for \$4.5 billion in flood control projects if voters approve a measure that was passed by the Legislature and authorized for the Nov. 7 ballot by Governor Schwarzenegger. The Sacramento metropolitan area and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta would be inline for the bulk of some \$3 billion in the ballot measure set aside for levee repairs.

San Jose Mercury News 5-11-06 - Even a moderate earthquake could cause California's aging levee system to collapse, flooding 400,000 homes and send brine into the drinking water of homes across Northern California. According to a computer-generated study at Stanford University, a 6.5 magnitude quake in the area of Antioch and Rio Vista could trigger the breaching of as many as 50 levees in the southwestern regions of the Sacramento Delta. "Your levees are not seismically safe. They're just piles of dirt," said retired Brig. Gen. Gerald Galloway of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Stockton Record 5-18-06 - The California Supreme Court turned down requests to review a lower court decision that could have lasting effects on water quality and delivery in California. Local water agencies and environmentalists were among those who argued the State Water Resources Control Board allowed water exporters to coordinate dam releases at the peril of San Joaquin River salmon runs and Delta salt levels. Water officials botched their 2000 decision granting water right permits to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the California Department of Water Resources. A month after the appeals court ruling, the state water board told the water exporters they must prevent future salt problems by improving operations, submitting regular reports and reporting any potential salt violations before they occur. In a related editorial (Contra Costa Times 5-1-06), a study by the Contra Costa Water

District strongly indicates that salinity is the key element in the ecological problems in the Delta.

Los Angeles Times – 5-19-06 – Governor Schwarzenegger named Linda Adams as the new director of the California Environmental Protection agency.

Reuters 5-8-06 – More than half the U.S. streams are polluted, with the worst conditions in the eastern third of the country, according to a study by the EPA. The first-ever study of shallow streams found 45 percent of the streams running west of the Rocky Mountains were the least polluted. The survey found that farming and logging helped raise the levels of nitrogen and phosphorous pollution in the water.

Riverside Press-Enterprise 5-9-06 – Commuters got a step closer to finding out whether it is possible to dig a tunnel under the mountains between Corona and Irvine for the future freeway. The Orange County Transportation Authority voted unanimously to approve an agreement with the Riverside Transportation Authority and the Metropolitan Water District to jointly explore whether such a tunnel is feasible.

Los Angeles Times 5-16-06 – The Supreme Court sided with the environment over electric power, ruling that state regulators may require a steady flow of water over power dams to benefit fish and kayakers. The unanimous decision holds that states may protect the health of their rivers, even over the aim of producing electricity.

Waterlines is a monthly e-mail news summary prepared by the Orange County Water District (OCWD) to keep you abreast of this changing water environment. Attached is a summary of statewide news reports on key water issues. As the manager of the groundwater basin that supplies 60 percent of Orange County's water supply, OCWD provides this handy, condensed news report to save you time while still keeping you abreast of water news that affects Orange County. We hope this will help you in the performance of your duties by keeping you up-to-date on key water stories affecting your organization and your constituents. If you have any questions, or know anyone who would like to receive this update, please contact Rose Wilke at (714) 378-3206 or rwilke@ocwd.com