

Waterlines

JANUARY 2006

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

San Jose Mercury News 1-5-06 – The first snow survey of the season found the Northern California snow pack at 145 percent of normal statewide. In a related Business Wire story, the Dept. of Water Resources increased its allocation of 2006 State Water Project water from 65 percent to 70 percent of requests from contractors.

San Francisco Chronicle 1-6-06 – Gov. Schwarzenegger called for a gigantic building spree that he said would unclog freeways, modernize schools and revamp the state's fragile levees in a State of the State Speech that mixed contrition for past mistakes with a bold call to upgrade California during the next decade. The proposal calls for new fees, among them a water fee on every California household and a dramatic increase in the use of toll lanes on freeways. In a related article, Contra Costa Times (1-6-06) reported of the \$36 billion earmarked for water and levee projects, \$6 billion is for levee maintenance and repair, \$3 billion is for water conservation, recycling, desalination, watershed management and similar program, and \$1.25 billion is for new storage facilities.

Monterey Herald 1-8-06 – A federal document that cleared the way for water users in the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California to take more water out of the Delta has serious scientific shortcomings, a panel of independent scientists concluded in a report called a biological opinion. The six-member team of scientists commissioned to answer challenges to the opinion's validity concluded unanimously that the scientific information used in the document is not the best available.

Imperial Valley News 1-12-06 – Rodney Smith, an economist for Imperial Irrigation District who worked on the transfer agreement with San Diego, reported in the first year of the 15-year fallowing program, the Valley saw a net loss of \$3.1 million dollars and 180 agricultural jobs.

Stockton Record 1-23-06 – Gov. Schwarzenegger's waterworks plan, which could send millions of flood-control dollars to San Joaquin County, hinges in part on a \$3 charge that would appear on every California homeowner's water bill every month.

San Francisco Chronicle 1-26-06 – The state Supreme Court agreed to decide whether a state-federal water agency considered effects on water supplies and the environment in its planned shipments from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to Southern California. The justices granted a hearing to the state on behalf of Calfed, which has the task of protecting water quality in the Delta and the San Francisco Bay while overseeing increased exports of water to cities and farms in Southern California.

Inland Valley Daily Bulletin 1-27-06 – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed a cleanup standard for a rocket fuel ingredient, perchlorate, that is four times weaker than the level proposed by California and is woefully inadequate to protect fetuses and children, critics say.

Los Angeles Times 1-31-06 – Water quality officials have found traces of prescription drugs in water that has been filtered and recycled into a Southern California aquifer for eventual use as drinking water. Because the medications have been found in very small amounts – the equivalent of a few drops in an Olympic-sized pool – scientist suspect there is little or no human danger.

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 Lisa Sanchez at (714) 378-3323 or lisasanchez@ocwd.com.