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DWR Releases Initial 2010 State Water Project Allocation

Sacramento – The Department of Water Resources (DWR) today announced an initial allocation of five percent of total contracted water deliveries to the State Water Project (SWP) contractors for 2010. Five percent is the lowest initial allocation percentage since the SWP began delivering water in 1967.

“The Legislature took a major step forward earlier this month to address the state’s water needs by heeding Governor Schwarzenegger’s call and passing the most comprehensive water package in California history,” said DWR Director Lester A. Snow. “Nevertheless, on the heels of a three-year drought, we need to prepare now so that we have adequate water supplies for homes, farms and businesses.”

The previous low for an initial allocation as a percentage of SWP contractors’ requests was 10 percent in 1993, but that number was increased to 100 percent during the year as supply conditions improved. The initial figure for 2009 of 15 percent was increased to a final allocation of 40 percent in May.

The historical average of final SWP allocations as a percentage of initial requests over the past 10 years has been 68 percent.

The initial allocation is a very conservative estimate of what DWR expects it can deliver as a percentage of SWP contractors’ initial requests for contracted water deliveries for a calendar year.

This year, the contractors have requested 100 percent of the maximum contractual amount allowed -- 4,171,996 acre-feet. While the initial 2010 allocation is only five percent of that amount, actual deliveries are expected to increase during the year once actual hydrologic and water supply conditions are known. SWP contractors provide

water to more than 25 million California residents and more than 750,000 acres of farmland.

The initial allocation figure reflects the low carryover storage levels in the state's major reservoirs, ongoing drought conditions and federally mandated environmental restrictions on water deliveries from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to protect endangered fish species in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The Department of Fish and Game's most recent survey indexes indicate that all four Delta pelagic fish species (Delta smelt, Longfin smelt, Striped bass and Threadfin shad) are at their lowest-ever population levels.

DWR will continue to monitor water supply conditions and drought impacts to identify any necessary supplemental response actions this year and will move aggressively to plan for a potentially dry 2010 in coordination with other state, federal and local agencies and the water community.

The announcement is part of the Department's effort to implement Gov. Schwarzenegger's Drought Executive Order (S-06-08) directing DWR to help local water districts and agencies proactively address these conditions.

A notice to SWP contractors appears on DWR's State Water Project Analysis Office Web site at: <http://www.swpao.water.ca.gov/notices/>