UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

June 2, 2008

Sammie Cervantes
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Subject: Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Environmental Water Account [CEQ #20080158]

Dear Ms. Cervantes:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the document referenced above. Our review and comments are provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Regulations at 40 CFR 1500-1508, and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

EPA reviewed the Supplemental Draft EIS (SDEIS) for the Environmental Water Account (EWA) extension to 2011 and provided comments on December 7, 2007. We rated the SDEIS as "EC-2: Environmental Concerns, Insufficient Information," due to continuing concerns with the need to strengthen the scientific basis for EWA actions, incorporate upcoming proposed facilities and operations, and address in more detail potential impacts to, and monitoring and protection of, water quality for drinking water and other uses. We recommended that the Final Supplemental EIS/EIR include additional information regarding EWA fisheries costs and benefits, recent legal and regulatory activities, water quality conditions and management, and project funding and practicability.

EPA commends the Bureau of Reclamation for their work on the EWA. Given the ongoing scientific, planning, and regulatory activities bearing on the future of the Delta, the responses to our comments on the SDEIS are appropriate. We appreciate the additional information included in the SFEIS and recognize that uncertainties regarding the Delta preclude resolution at this time of some issues raised during review of the SDEIS. While we continue to have concerns with the EWA, we concur with a short-term and adaptable approach to the program.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this SFEIS. When the Record of Decision is signed, please send one copy to the address above (mail code: CED-2). If you have any questions, please contact me at 415-972-3846, or Laura Fujii, the lead reviewer for this project. Laura can be reached at 415-972-3852 or fujii.laura@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Nova Blazej, Manager
Environmental Review Office
Communities and Ecosystems Division

cc:
Jerry Johns, California Department of Water Resources
Jim White, California Department of Fish and Game
Maria Rea, National Marine Fisheries Service
Roger Guinee, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service