



October 7, 2013

Re: Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report Regarding the Proposed Salmon Conservation and Research Facility and Related Management Actions Project

To Interested Parties:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is making available a draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for public review. CDFW, formerly known as the California Department of Fish and Game, has prepared this DEIR to provide the public, responsible agencies, and trustee agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed Salmon Conservation and Research Facility (SCARF) and Related Fisheries Management Actions Project (Project or Proposed Project). This DEIR was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (as amended) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] title 14, section (§) 15000 et seq.). CDFW hereby invites comments on the adequacy and completeness of the environmental analyses in the DEIR.

PROJECT LOCATION: The SCARF would be located at the address currently listed as 17372 Brook Trout Drive in Friant, Fresno County, California. The SCARF site is adjacent to the San Joaquin River approximately 1.1 miles downstream of Friant Dam, immediately west of CDFW's existing San Joaquin Fish Hatchery (SJFH). The Project Area also includes other locations where physical actions that are part of the Proposed Project would take place, including broodstock collection sites, quarantine sites, Chinook salmon production and reintroduction sites, and fisheries management and research areas. The DEIR also makes reference to the Restoration Area, which includes the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam to the confluence of the Merced River, and the Potentially Affected Area, including the portions of the San Joaquin River watershed, Sacramento River watershed, Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta (Delta), San Francisco Bay, and Pacific Ocean that are accessible to salmon released under the Proposed Project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: The Proposed Project, as analyzed in this DEIR, consists of evaluation of the proposed construction and operation of the SCARF and associated improvements and activities. The primary purpose of the SCARF is to produce Chinook salmon for reintroduction to the San Joaquin River. The SCARF would provide CDFW with the ability to use relatively small numbers of Chinook salmon eggs and juveniles collected from various donor populations to develop a broodstock. This broodstock would enable CDFW to produce a conservation stock that is genetically diverse, while minimizing impacts to source populations. Thus, the SCARF would play an important role in achieving the SJRRP spring-run Chinook salmon population objectives established in the FMP.

The DEIR evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Project and four project alternatives: the No Project Alternative (CDFW would not construct the SCARF or other facilities to propagate spring-run or fall-run Chinook salmon); the Spring-Run Only Alternative (which would reintroduce only spring-run Chinook salmon to the Restoration Area; no fall-run Chinook salmon would be actively reintroduced); the Hatchery Broodstock Only Alternative (only the Feather River Fish Hatchery would be used to provide a source of spring-run broodstock; no

wild sources of broodstock would be used); and the SCARF siting Alternative (the SCARF would be constructed at an alternative site).

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines §415087, given the size of the Proposed Project area, it is possible that hazardous waste sites or listed toxic sites listed by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (Cal-EPA) may be present in the area. The analysis in the DEIR concluded that the location for the SCARF facility does not overlap with listed sites and did not identify any potentially significant impacts that would require mitigation to reduce effects to a less-than-significant level, or that would be significant and unavoidable. Other facilities to be constructed under the Proposed Project would be evaluated for their potential to be located on a hazardous waste site or listed toxic site listed by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (Cal-EPA) once their specific locations have been identified.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: The DEIR and supporting documents are available for download from the CDFW's website: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/news/pubnotice/>.

Printed copies of the DEIR and supporting documents are available to review during regular business hours at CDFW's offices in Fresno and Sacramento (listed below). Copies are also available to review at county libraries in Davis, Fresno, Los Banos, Sacramento, Visalia, Willows, and Yolo (listed below). CDs are available on request by phoning (510) 986-1850 or emailing REG4SCARFCEQA@wildlife.ca.gov. They will also be available at the public meetings in Fresno and Sacramento. Printed copies are also available at cost plus postage, upon request using the above contact information.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: The DEIR is available for a 45-day public review and comment period, which begins on October 7, 2013 and ends at 5 p.m. on November 21, 2013. **Please send comments on the DEIR at the earliest possible date, but postmarked no later than 5 p.m. on November 21, 2013 in order for your comments to be considered.**

Comments may be mailed to the following address:

California Department of Fish and Wildlife
ATTN: Gerald Hatler, SCARF Draft EIR Comments
1234 E. Shaw Avenue
Fresno, CA 93710

Written comments may also be submitted by email to: REG4SCARFCEQA@wildlife.ca.gov. Emailed comments are preferred, and should include your name, address, and daytime telephone number so a representative of CDFW can contact you if clarifications regarding your comments are required.

All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official public record. A Final Environmental Impact Report will be prepared which will include responses to comments received during the public review period.

PUBLIC MEETINGS: All interested persons are encouraged to attend the public meetings to present written and/or verbal comments on the DEIR. Two public meetings will be held at the following locations and times:

- Fresno, CA: Monday, November 4, 2013 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the California Retired Teachers Association Building (3930 E. Saginaw Way, Fresno, CA 93726)

- Sacramento, CA: Wednesday, November 6, 2013 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Department of Health Care Services and Department of Public Health Building (1500 Capitol Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95814).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JRS', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jeffrey R. Single, Ph.D.
Regional Manager

Locations where DEIR copies can be reviewed:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Fresno Office, 1234 East Shaw Avenue, Fresno, CA 93710
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Fresno Office, 1130 East Shaw Avenue, Suite 206, Fresno, CA 93710
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Sacramento Office, 1416 9th Street, 12th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Fresno Central Branch Library, 2420 Mariposa Street, Fresno, CA 93721
- Los Banos Public Library, 1312 South 7th Street, Los Banos, CA 93635
- Sacramento Public Library, 828 I Street, Sacramento, CA, 95814
- Visalia Branch Library, 200 West Oak Avenue, Visalia, CA 93291-4931
- Willows Public Library, 201 North Lassen Street, Willows, CA 95988
- Yolo County Library, 37750 Sacramento Street, Yolo, CA 95697
- Yolo County Library, Davis Branch, 315 East 14th Street, Davis, CA 95616