



For Immediate Release:
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**STATEMENT FROM FRIANT WATER AUTHORITY RELATED TO RECENT ACTION
BY THE STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS**

Late yesterday the Biden Administration, in consultation with the Newsom Administration, submitted a draft plan to a Federal judge for how the Federal government will operate the Central Valley Project in 2022 (2022 Interim Operations Plan, or IOP). Unfortunately, the proposed plan risks reducing California's water supply, if the drought continues into next year, by adopting requirements that Federal scientists in 2019 said are not necessary for the recovery of listed species. The current biological opinions that the IOP seeks to replace in 2022 were the product of more than three years of extensive stakeholder engagement, underwent significant scientific scrutiny, and was subject to a full environmental review. By comparison, the IOP has not been subjected to extensive stakeholder engagement, has not undergone any scientific scrutiny, and there has been no environmental analysis or public review, which has denied the public the right to know how these plans will impact their water supply.

The IOP was developed primarily by State and Federal agencies meeting behind closed doors with limited input from others. These closed-door negotiations over the IOP deprived public water agencies, like the Friant Water Authority (FWA), of the ability to provide potential solutions for consideration by these officials, who under law are required to work with public water agencies on any changes to the existing biological opinions. In these unprecedented times, it is more critical than ever for all potential solutions to be on the table and all stakeholders to be heard.

The communities, farms, wetlands, and fisheries in the San Joaquin Valley face a unique risk from the 2022 IOP. If the actions it includes are implemented this water year, the likelihood that the water supply that is desperately needed in the Valley could be lost, increasing the number of domestic wells that will go dry and farms that will be fallowed.

The work that happens next will be critical to finding these solutions. Federal agency officials have pledged to continue working with FWA and other public water agencies over the next several months in an effort to address our concerns. I look forward to this dialogue and the development of an IOP that manages our water supply in a way that complies with existing obligations and avoids unnecessary involuntary impacts.