



Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia, 36th Assembly District

AB 2610 – Extended Environmental Coverage

Updated 2/23/23

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) launched the Lower Colorado River Basin System Conservation and Efficiency Program (LC Conservation Program) in 2023 as part of the Department of Interior’s commitment to address the drought crisis within the Colorado River Basin. The water conservation efforts implemented under the LC Conservation Program are funded by the federal Inflation Reduction Act. The Imperial Irrigation District (IID) is negotiating a SCIA with Reclamation under the LC Conservation Program to conserve a cumulative target of 800,000 acre-feet of Colorado River water during 2024-2026. This conserved water would be generated entirely by agricultural water users voluntarily participating in conservation programs administered by IID. Reclamation is also soliciting water conservation from long-term durable system efficiency improvement projects. IID submitted a proposal for a SCIA for such projects and is awaiting selection. Any water conserved by IID pursuant to a SCIA would be in addition to the existing conservation created by IID for the water transfers under the Quantification Settlement Agreement.

Furthermore, the SCIA currently being negotiated triggers the release of \$175 million in federal funding earmarked for SSMP environmental projects.

ISSUE

California Fish and Game Code Section 2081.7 authorizes the take of species, with certain requirements, resulting from impacts attributable to the implementation of the Quantification Settlement Agreement of 2003. AB 2610 extends that existing limited authority of DFW to authorize the take of species resulting from impacts attributable to the implementation of the SSMP, spearheaded by the Natural Resources Agency, and SCIA during 2024 through 2026 between IID and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

The narrowly focused amendments proposed in AB 2610 are necessary in order for IID to enter into any SCIA during 2024-2026 to implement water conservation programs and projects for the creation of at least the targeted 800,000 acre-feet of conserved water.

BILL SUMMARY

AB 2610 extends existing limited authority of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to authorize the take of species resulting from impacts attributable to the implementation of the Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) and System Conservation Implementation Agreements (SCIA) during 2024 through 2026.

SUPPORT

Imperial Irrigation District

For More Information:

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