

# SALTON SEA RESTORATION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY INITIATIVE: A PLAN FOR ACTION



## **Purpose**

The purpose of the framework document is to begin a dialogue with the state of California that will enable it to restore the Salton Sea in a manner that provides water supply reliability for coastal Southern California, protects public health in the Imperial and Coachella valleys, preserves the Salton Sea as one of the key stopping points on the Pacific Flyway, and generates renewable energy to power California in the 21st century. IID believes it can achieve these goals in a way that jumpstarts economic development in the Imperial and Coachella valleys and that is fiscally responsible for the state of California.

## **Protecting public health and the environment**

The Salton Sea is forecasted to shrink in size by about 100 square miles over the coming years. A smaller Salton Sea will uncover highly emissive playa, which could create dust storms like those seen during the “Dust Bowl” of the 1930s. This fine-grained dust lodges in lung tissue and can cause many respiratory diseases, including asthma. The plan contained in the framework document is intended to limit the extent of exposed playa and protect public health from the effects of fugitive dust.

## **Generating renewable energy and creating jobs in Imperial County**

The Brown administration and the Legislature have stated that California needs to achieve a goal of using renewable energy to generate 50 percent of all power used in California by 2030. To achieve this goal, California needs to find new sources of baseload energy, which is the energy that provides power 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It also needs to find new sources of peaking energy, which is required during the hot summer months. The plan contained in the framework document shows that the Imperial and Coachella valleys can provide both types of energy. Imperial County is home to the largest untapped source of geothermal energy in the state. It provides baseload power, and has a very large potential to provide California with additional solar energy during peak periods. Both of these renewable energy sources – especially geothermal – provide good jobs, sorely needed in Imperial County.

## **Fiscal responsibility**

In 2007, the state of California issued a plan that estimated the cost of restoring the Salton Sea at approximately \$9 billion. That price tag has blocked progress for most of the last decade. This framework document proposes that the state meet its obligation to fund the restoration of the Salton Sea by investing approximately \$3.1 billion in projects at the Salton Sea where the state would receive a return on its money invested. Fiscal responsibility requires no less.

## **The time is now**

In 2003, the state of California assumed responsibility for the restoration of the Salton Sea, if restoration were determined to be feasible. Now, experts who have studied the Salton Sea – both environmental groups and academia – all believe that it is possible to restore the Salton Sea by making it smaller but sustainable. The state of California has the chance to redeem its promise to the people of the Imperial and Coachella valleys, to be their partner in a coordinated and collaborative program that will enhance their quality of life while restoring the natural environment and combatting climate change.

Now is the time for the state of California to act. IID is ready to collaborate and work with the state, for the benefit of the people of the Imperial and Coachella valleys.

**To learn more, please visit [www.iid.com/saltonsea](http://www.iid.com/saltonsea).**

