

A SOLUTION TO RESTORING THE SALTON SEA LIES WITHIN THE SEA ITSELF



The Salton Sea is the largest inland lake in California, totaling more than 375 square miles in Imperial and Riverside counties. The Sea supports a diverse wildlife habitat for over 400 species of birds and serves as a critical link on the 5,000-mile international Pacific Flyway for bird migration.

CRISIS AT THE SALTON SEA

Today, the Salton Sea faces a crisis. In recent years, it has developed increasing salinity and other water quality problems that have made it inhospitable to wildlife, recreation and other human uses. The sea elevation has also been receding due to reduced inflows resulting from changing hydrological conditions on the Colorado River system.

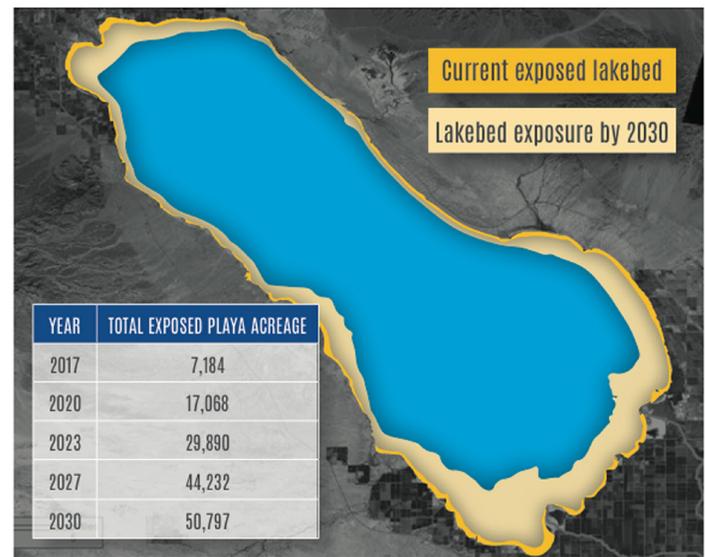
After 2017, mitigation flows to the Salton Sea to offset the impact of water transfers will cease, causing the sea to shrink dramatically and hastening its decline in water quality. In addition, a receding sea will expose more than 50,000 acres of lakebed made up of silt and fine-grain soil particles that contain farm-field sediments. This exposure poses an urgent threat to air quality for residents in the Imperial and Coachella valleys, as desert winds moving across the “playa” will cause fine dust and toxins to become airborne.

Together, these water and air quality issues present imminent public health and environmental risks that must be addressed.

A BOLD NEW VISION FOR ACTION

After a decade during which commitments made by the State of California to restore the Salton Sea have not been fulfilled, a new vision has emerged: a smaller but sustainable Salton Sea that enables restoration through harnessing its vast renewable energy potential.

PLAYA EXPOSURE: 2012 - 2030



The Salton Sea Restoration & Renewable Energy Initiative, launched by the Imperial Irrigation District in partnership with Imperial County, will leverage funds generated by new renewable energy projects located at the sea to help finance activities for air quality management and habitat restoration. Projects sited on exposed lakebed will serve a dual purpose: producing renewable energy while doubling as groundcover to mitigate air emissions. Under legislation enacted in 2013, planning and implementing projects at the sea are being driven locally by the Salton Sea Authority, with support from the State of California.



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The Initiative focuses on developing up to 1,700 megawatts of new geothermal energy at the Sea – enough to power more than one million homes. Not only is there more geothermal generating capacity in the Imperial Valley than anywhere else in the U.S., but geothermal energy can be produced with minimal impact on landscape and habitat. It also provides a steady, reliable source of energy to the state electricity grid that is not subject to weather or seasonal fluctuations.

Core components of the Salton Sea Restoration & Renewable Energy Initiative include:

- Designating the Salton Sea as a renewable energy development area
- Pledging IID's land holdings and mineral assets, as well as potentially those of the federal government, for generation projects such as utility-scale geothermal, solar and wind, subsurface mining operations and emerging resources (algae and solar gradient ponds)
- Pursuing public-private partnerships and environmental alliances to develop new renewable energy resources
- Continuing to work with state and federal regulatory agencies and investor-owned utilities to execute power purchase agreements and plan for the development of new transmission lines, such as a new 500 kilovolt line from eastern Riverside County to IID's Imperial Valley substation

KNOWN GEOTHERMAL RESOURCE AREA AT THE SALTON SEA



COLLABORATING FOR SOLUTIONS

Implementing the initiative will require actions from numerous local, state and federal government agencies, as well as private companies that can invest capital and experience in developing renewable energy projects. The initiative will also require engagement by community stakeholders committed to restoring the Salton Sea to protect local communities and wildlife species from the consequences of its unchecked demise.

Working together, the initiative can help assure the future of the Salton Sea, protect public health, conserve vital species habitat and create stability for meeting California's water supply and energy needs.



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