

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SALTON SEA STABILIZATION AND RESTORATION: QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



## WHY DID THE COUNTY OF IMPERIAL, THE IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT AND THE COUNTY AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT ENTER INTO THIS AGREEMENT?

The parties developed this agreement to formalize goals and commitments that, when taken together, will enable them to pursue strategies to leverage the renewable energy resources at and around the Salton Sea as a means by which to avoid public health, environmental and economic consequences that will occur if the sea shrinks at an accelerated rate after 2017.

## IS THE MOU LEGALLY BINDING?

This agreement binds the parties to working collaboratively to meet the specified goals and uphold certain obligations through Dec. 31, 2017, when the mitigation inflows of water to the Salton Sea will cease. This MOU is not intended to be affected by any settlement or judgment related to the Quantification Settlement Agreement.

## WHAT DOES THE MOU SAY ABOUT WATER TRANSFERS AND WATER SUPPLIES?

IID will not take any action that would result in any additional water transfers, and both IID and the county will vigorously oppose any efforts by another entity to effectuate such an outcome.

Within 90 days from the effective date of this MOU, IID will withdraw its petition filed with the State Water Resources Control Board in October 2011 to modify the 2002 Order issued by the Control Board.

The parties also will explore whether any alternative water supplies can be developed for agricultural, municipal, industrial and environmental uses to minimize the impacts of Colorado River water shortages and to sustain the Salton Sea as contemplated under a viable restoration plan.

## WHAT AIR QUALITY ISSUES ARE AT STAKE?

The exposure of dried lakebed will be accelerated after 2017, when replacement (or mitigation) water ceases to be delivered to the Salton Sea. This receding shoreline will result in increased amounts of dust and air pollution to such a degree that the public health (especially children, the elderly and those suffering from asthma or bronchitis) will be at serious risk. The parties pledge to cooperate with each other (including sharing costs) to meet federal air quality standards and to avoid economic penalties (including the potential loss of millions of dollars in federal transportation funding).

## HOW WILL THE PARTIES DEVELOP A VIABLE RESTORATION PLAN FOR THE SALTON SEA?

The parties pledge to work with the Salton Sea Authority to update its 2006 restoration plan (or possibly develop a new plan) consistent with revised estimates of water inflows and funding sources. The parties believe that such a plan will be scaled to a smaller, but sustainable Sea and a restoration plan. In September, Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill 71 by Assemblyman V. Manuel Perez, under which the authority will lead a funding and feasibility study for Salton Sea restoration and coordinate with the California Resources Agency on restoration efforts.

## WHAT ARE THE GOALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES?

The parties pledge to work together to develop geothermal, solar, wind and algae in the Known Geothermal Resource Area and around the Salton Sea. IID pledges the use of its land and mineral assets toward this end, and will establish an "open season" when renewable energy developers can bid for projects.

The parties also pledge to work together to plan, secure funding and build a new transmission line interconnecting IID's system with the export capacity of 1,400-1,700 megawatts to transport renewable energy to load centers throughout the state.

## WHAT EXPECTATIONS DO THE PARTIES HAVE REGARDING THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS?

The parties expect California to fulfill its statutory obligation to appropriate funds to restore the Salton Sea. But the parties will endeavor to generate local funds to bolster the state's financial support through development of renewable energy projects in the KGRA and around the Salton Sea. The parties also expect cooperation from federal, state and local agencies to help fund and build the new transmission line and help secure power purchase agreements with utilities.

The parties also hope the state and federal government will allow its land at the Salton Sea to be used for development of renewable energy and explore other opportunities to generate new funding sources for a viable restoration plan.



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