

AGREEMENT ON SALTON SEA STABILIZATION AND RESTORATION



On Oct. 24, 2013, the boards of Imperial Irrigation District, Imperial County and the County Air Pollution Control District each approved a Memorandum of Understanding binding the parties to collaborate on a strategy to assist in the restoration of the Salton Sea – California’s largest inland lake that is threatened by decreasing water inflows. The MOU comes 10 years after the parties were on opposing sides of litigation concerning water transfers from Imperial Valley to California’s coastal communities and the impact of these transfers on the Salton Sea and surrounding communities.

The MOU identifies numerous areas of shared concern related to the Salton Sea, including:

- The end of mitigation water at the end of 2017, which will hasten the sea’s decline;
- Human health consequences resulting from the increased air pollution that will occur as the Sea dries up, which may result in federal sanctions and economic harm; and
- Uncertainty of funding to initiate restoration from the state and federal government; and
- The need for sufficient water for Imperial County agricultural, municipal and industrial uses.

To address these concerns, the MOU commits the parties to undertake a number of actions designed to advance the development of the significant renewable energy assets at the Sea, which will generate funding to bolster the state’s efforts to meet its funding obligation for restoration:

- Work cooperatively to develop geothermal, wind, algae and solar energy in the Known Geothermal Resource Area and around the Salton Sea to generate local restoration funds;
- Jointly pursue a state commitment to build and fund a transmission line with export capacity of 1,400-1,700 megawatts to transport energy from the KGRA to load centers throughout the state;
- Create an opportunity where private developers can propose projects on IID-owned land and pledge the use of IID’s land and mineral assets to generate funding;

- Work with the Salton Sea Authority to update its restoration plan consistent with updated inflow estimates and projected revenue;
- Jointly pursue a strategy to secure funding and supportive actions from the state and federal governments, including the pledging of land assets, adoption of an energy surcharge at Hoover Dam and acknowledgment that using water for mitigation and restoration at the Salton Sea is a reasonable and beneficial use;
- Affirm that no further water transfer agreements will be entered into and that IID will withdraw its petition with the State Water Resources Control Board to end mitigation flows sooner than the end of 2017;
- Coordinate activities on air quality matters;
- Evaluate the development of alternative water supplies locally and encourage coastal communities to pursue desalinization; and
- Preserve IID’s energy balancing authority.



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