



## CONSERVATION WORKSHOPS JULY 21-22 Q&A

**Q-1 What is the loss from Lake Mead to the delivery gate for the growers participating on OFECP?**

A-1 There is an approximate 4% loss factor credited to all conservation back to IID's diversion point (Station 60 at Imperial Dam) from the "at-field" conservation values.

**Q-2 If there is a crop proposed for OFECP participation that was not grown during the 10-year history used for OFECP baseline, what is used instead?**

A-2 When there is no crop history (or insufficient data) for a participating field, data for the crop group, a Valley-wide average on the same soil type or comparison between the field's historical efficiencies to the district-wide efficiencies for an expected crop efficiency can be used.

**Q-3 For 2026, has IID looked into Farm Unit participating under the Deficit Irrigation Program?**

A-3 The specific selection criteria for the smaller 2026 DIP has not yet been established, however a proration based on Farm Units has been suggested by many growers.

**Q-4 Will irrigation count under OFECP calculations if grower waits at least 30 days after pre-irrigation activities to initiate the OFECP participation period?**

A-4 No, water deliveries to a field more than 30 days before a crop plant date are not utilized in the OFECP calculation. However, if the pre-irrigation is at or within 30 days of the plant date, the water delivery and  $ET_{AW}$  will be charged and accounted for in the OFECP calculations.

**Q-5 Will growers that were removed from 2025 participation as a result of the lottery be considered to be excluded from any 2026 draw?**

A-5 The 2025 DIP did not provide for carryovers of excluded fields. The 2026 DIP selection criteria have not yet been established.

**Q-6 Are IID’s conservation programs saving less water than what is needed by Reclamation?**

A-6 IID’s federal System Conservation Implementation Agreement (SCIA) has an annual funding cap of 300,000 AF and a cumulative funding cap of 700,000 AF over the three-year contract term (2024 – 2026). There are also annual environmental permit limits (both acreage and volumetric) for the DIP.

**Q-7 Is the remaining water conservation savings balance for 2026 over 150 KAF?**

A-7 Based on current estimates, yes. The SCIA funded 257,640 AF of conservation in 2024 and IID currently anticipates over 261,000± AF of SCIA-funded conservation in 2025, which will leave an estimated 181,000± AF of funding capacity for 2026. This means the 2026 DIP is likely to be about 40—50% smaller next year.

**Q-8 Will the \$1 Billion of excess from transfer/conservation sales be used to increase the OFECP grower payments?**

A-8 IID’s federal funding under the SCIA will be significantly less than \$1 billion. Funding decisions and conservation payment rates are authorized by the IID Board of Directors, who increased the OFECP payments by an additional \$100/AF in 2025 and 2026 as a result of the SCIA to incentivize additional conservation to be left in Lake Mead to protect critical reservoir elevations.

**Q-9 Has any consideration been given for the use of interest income deriving from the excess transfer money to be used to subsidize the water service delivery rate?**

A-9 Water transfer revenues are already used to offset rate shortfalls for the Water Department, in much larger amounts than the interest income generated by those funds. As the board considers updating the water rate in 2026, a cost-of-service study is under development and interest income could be considered in the rate-setting process at the board’s discretion.

**Q-10 Is IID’s current direction to prioritize system conservation over on-farm efficiency conservation?**

A-10 The Board considers both types of conservation critical to maintaining beneficial use standards, achieving water conservation objectives and providing operational flexibility.

**Q-11 Does IID carry any current debt for the water system?**

A-11 There is no water system debt.

**Q-12 Is the QSA extension beyond the 35-year term still contemplated?**

A-12 The San Diego County Water Authority transfer is a 45-year agreement; while the 2003 agreement included a 10-year early termination notice SDCWA did not respond to that by the 2017 deadline. SDCWA has previously expressed an interest in renewing the agreement however no formal discussions have occurred. As per the Fourth Amendment to the water transfer agreement, renewal notices are required by 2040.

**Q13 – As the Colorado River flows drop, what position will IID take if the current Administration does not want to fund conservation programs?**

A-13 IID has requested the 2024-2026 SCIA funding cap be increased in 2026 given the current reservoir conditions and declining hydrology. Post-2026, we need to be cognizant that Colorado River is the Imperial Valley's only water supply and it is imperative that certain Colorado River reservoir elevations be protected to ensure flows to the Lower Basin, including IID, can be maintained in the future. IID has been a strong advocate for voluntary compensated conservation programs that provide for local considerations such as the Salton Sea.

**Q-14 What over/under run is currently projected for IID?**

A-14 Reclamation's water use forecast is posted at <https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/hourly/forecast.pdf> and as of July 28, 2025 indicated an overrun of just over 10,000 AF. IID anticipates this will continue to decline through the duration of the 2025 DIP to an underrun projection.

**Q-15 The underrun will likely plummet due to the removal of sugar beets. Has a water stabilization plan been considered?**

A-15 There has been no discussion of new programs in 2025, nor is there sufficient time to complete the environmental permitting that would be necessary to implement any such program this year.

**Q-16 – Can a grower re-enter the OFECP after ending efficiency measures in order to participate in the DIP instead?**

A-16 Yes, the 2025 DIP allows fields to participate in the 2025 OFECP after their DIP term has concluded if their field irrigation method/conservation measure(s) includes drip, sprinkler and/or a Tailwater Return Systems. However, the grower must submit a new application to the OFECP to be eligible for this post-DIP participation.

**Q-17 When does 95% ET come into effect?**

A-17 The OFECP conservation payment is an efficiency-based incentive for improvement in the utilization of applied water by a crop due to the implementation of a field conservation measure when compared to growing an equivalent crop without that conservation measure. The 95%  $ET_{AW}$  cap has been a part of the board-authorized OFECP program since 2021, and was included to balance changes made to the crop season definition that excluded water applied more than 30 day prior to the crop plant date. Prior to that there was a similar 95% adjustment made for high CUFs. The  $ET_{AW}$  cap provides a safeguard against deficit irrigation to ensure the OFECP is a legally defensible efficiency conservation program that supports IID's beneficial use of its water supply. The  $ET_{AW}$  cap at 95% of delivered water is reasonable because if water is not applied it cannot be transpired.

**Q-18 How much storage water is on the River System and can it be used for Lake Mead instead of using the Deficit Irrigation Program?**

A-18 IID has several water storage accounts at both Lake Mead and in MWD's reservoir system, totaling just over 330,000 AF at the end of 2024. IID operates under 2007 Interim Shortage Guideline rules, which prohibit the delivery of Lake Mead storage water under shortage conditions. (IID was not a party to the 2019 Drought Contingency Plan, which would have authorized additional storage and the delivery of water under more liberal shortage conditions). The federal SCIA only authorizes payment to IID for new conservation that will increase the elevation of Lake Mead and is created from the OFECP, DIP or fallowing – not prior conservation.