UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

FEB 24 2011

Alicia Forsythe
Acting Program Manager
San Joaquin River Restoration Program
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Mid-Pacific Region
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825-1898

Subject: Participation as a Cooperating Agency for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program, Mendota Pool Bypass and Reach 2B Improvements Project.

Dear Ms. Forsythe:

Thank you for your recent letter inviting EPA to be a cooperating agency for preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program, Mendota Pool Bypass and Reach 2B Improvements Project (SJRRP Reach 2B). As you know, EPA has long been involved with efforts to improve conditions in the San Joaquin River, and we believe the current San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) and tiered projects can be a turning point for successful restoration. In this spirit, we are already participating in the environmental analysis and documentation for the SJRRP Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) as a cooperating agency.

We accept the invitation to also participate, as a cooperating agency, in aspects of the environmental analysis and documentation best suited to our expertise and jurisdictional interests for the SJRRP Reach 2B Project. We look forward to information on how work for this Project will be integrated with the work on the SJRRP Programmatic EIS, and the relative timing of the SJRRP PEIS, Reach 2B EIS, and Reach 4B EIS.

We anticipate involvement of staff from two offices: the Environmental Review Office (ERO, within the Communities and Ecosystems Division) and the Water Division. The corresponding areas of expertise would be compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and water quality, including wetlands, riverine habitat, and resource functions supporting these habitats.

The lead contact for our work will be Carolyn Yale, in the Water Division (415-972-3482; yale.carolyn@epa.gov). She will be coordinating with Laura Fujii in the ERO, which conducts our NEPA document reviews. At this time we do not anticipate the need for a memorandum of agreement formalizing our participation. However, we would like to emphasize that our role as a cooperating agency during document preparation will be technical in nature, and that this assistance does not abridge our responsibilities for independent review of the Draft and Final EIS pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on

Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA). Please note that EPA has requirements for the use of the EPA seal and must grant permission for its use by another agency or organization.

We look forward to working with the Bureau of Reclamation and the other involved agencies.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Goforth, Manager
Environmental Review Office
Communities and Ecosystems Division