

Questions & Answers for the August 21/22 BRTF Meeting

1. Why are you undertaking this effort?

The Record of Decision for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program (CALFED 2000) called for a Delta Risk Management Strategy (DRMS) to be completed. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR), California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) initiated DRMS to understand the response of the levee system to stressors in the Delta. Subsequently Assembly Bill (AB) 1200 (Laird, Chaptered October 2005), required the DWR to evaluate the potential impacts on water supplies derived from the Delta resulting from a variety of risks.

The bill amends Section 139.2 of the Water Code, to read, "The Department shall evaluate the potential impacts on water supplies derived from the Delta based on 50-, 100-, and 200-year projections for each of the following possible impacts on the Delta:

- Subsidence*
- Earthquakes*
- Floods*
- Changes in precipitation, temperature, and ocean levels*
- A combination of the impacts specified in paragraphs (1) to (4) inclusive*

DRMS is one of the programs, including the BDCP work, that Department of Water Resources will use to address the provisions of Sections 139.2 and 139.4 of AB 1200."

2. What will be the final work products of these efforts?

The DRMS project is divided into two parts. In the Phase 1 report, the work involves the development and implementation of a risk analysis to evaluate the risks from various stressing events to Delta and Suisun Marsh levees. The DRMS Phase 1 Risk Analysis provides a framework for evaluating major threats, or hazards, to the Delta levee system and the consequences (economic and environmental) of levee failures. Phase 2 of the project will develop, based on the risks identified in Phase 1, risk reduction and risk management strategies for long-term management of the Delta.

3. When will those work products be completed and available to policy makers?

The Phase I report is undergoing a final review by a CALFED Science Board selected Independent Review Panel (IRP) of top scientists and engineers from around the country. The panel will complete its review in early September 2008. DWR will then make a final revision of the report and have it ready for release in October 2008.

The Phase 2 report, which is currently composed of 3 trial scenarios to reduce the risk from seismic and flood events in the Delta, will be ready for release about 2 months after the Phase 1 report, in December 2008.

4. Whose decision(s) makes this work "final?" When will they make that decision?

The final decision will be made by the director of DWR after completion of both the Phase 1 and 2 reports.

5. What are the geographical boundaries to which the policy actions recommended will apply?

While the DRMS study itself will not make policy recommendations, the work considers, the "Legal Delta" as defined in Section 12220 of the Water Code, and the Suisun Marsh east of the Benicia-Martinez Bridge on Interstate 680, as the geographical area for the DRMS project. All risk reduction measures pertain to this defined area.

6. What policies and/or programmatic decisions will this information inform?

The information generated by the DRMS is currently being used by several other groups. The Public Policy Institute of California has referenced DRMS in several parts of a report released in July 2008, titled "Comparing Futures". The USACE will be relying on DRMS data in preparing their Delta Levees and Islands Feasibility Study. To some extent, data, concepts and findings from DRMS has informed the Delta-Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force, and the Legislature. DRMS information will also be utilized by DWR in the preparation of "Guidelines for Investing Public Resources in the Levee System of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh".

7. When will those policy and/or programmatic decisions be made? By whom?

The PPIC report has been prepared and submitted to the public. The Corps of Engineers Feasibility Study is in its initial efforts and will not be completed for several years. DWR is committed to presenting for public review the draft Guidelines by the end of CY 2008.

8. What will full success of this effort mean?

One measure of success of the project would be agreement among the Scientific and Engineering community, that the DRMS Phase 1 work used the best available data, and followed proper scientific protocols in determining the most significant risks that threaten the Delta and its beneficial uses. Full success would mean policy makers, including DWR, have necessary information to implement the risk reduction scenarios, in the most efficient and effective manner.

9. When will those effects occur?

The DRMS project deliverables will be finalized by the end of 2008. However, the effects of the study will be fully realized only when there is a plan for the future of the Delta with policy and legislation to support those actions.