



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Northern California Water Districts Gather to Celebrate Success of Emergency Water Project

“Reverse Flow” Engineering Meant Last-Ditch Survival for Area Farmers

Byron, CA (August 25, 2015) -- On August 25, 2015, nearly 100 employees, board members and neighbors gathered at Byron-Bethany Irrigation District to honor the heroic measures taken by the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority several weeks ago when the organization literally changed the direction of the Delta-Mendota Canal for the first time in history. The emergency “Pump Back Program” was a desperate drought project – the first of its kind designed to keep six area water districts from going dry.

“Our team accomplished the impossible,” says Frances Mizuno, Assistant Executive Director of San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority, which operates the canal. “Moving water in the opposite direction while facing daunting time constraints was nothing short of amazing. This team is to be applauded for their tenacity and hard work.”

The \$700,000 project was led by Engineering Director Bob Martin and involved the installation of several massive pumps in three locations over a six-week period between May and July. The project allowed canal water to be lifted 18 feet along 62 miles from the San Luis Reservoir to the City of Tracy. The result was more than 80,000 acre-feet of banked water in the San Luis Reservoir to get the water agencies through the summer. The districts include the Del Puerto Water District, the West Stanislaus Irrigation District, the Patterson Irrigation District, the Banta-Carbona Irrigation District, Byron-Bethany Irrigation District and the City of Tracy.

“This quick thinking and unconventional solution brought a real success story in our region during an otherwise extremely dire period,” says Rick Gilmore, General Manager of Byron-Bethany Irrigation District. “Recent actions by the State Water Board have meant that we simply do not have the water we need to meet the needs of our customers. We are grateful to the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority for providing our farmers and ranchers with a lifeline.”

Byron-Bethany Irrigation District (BBID) is a multi-county special district serving parts of Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Joaquin Counties. The District serves a total area of 47 miles and 30,000 acres. For more information visit www.bbid.org. For additional media information, contact Erin Gilhuly at 760.641.0739 or via email at erin@cvstrat.com.

###