



WATER AGENCY

Delivering Quality, Reliability and Safety

Bay Area Regional Desalination Project FAQ

The Bay Area Regional Desalination Project is a partnership between Contra Costa Water District (CCWD), San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Valley Water, and Zone 7 Water Agency. East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) may also participate with a limited role of potentially moving water on behalf of the other desalination partners.

Q.
A.

How would this type of project work and how much water might Zone 7 receive?

This project looks at the possibility of treating brackish water diverted from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta using CCWD's Mallard Slough Pump Station in eastern Contra Costa County and then conveying the water through the existing connections with various agencies, as well as a new intertie that would connect EBMUD and Zone 7's water systems. A benefit to using brackish water is that it is less salty than seawater and therefore much less energy intensive.

This project could provide 10-20 million gallons per day (MGD) of drinking water, and Zone 7 could potentially receive up to 5,000 acre-feet of water per year.



One way Zone 7 could take delivery of the water through the Delta and South Bay Aqueduct is by exchanging water with CCWD. The "exchange" would occur by CCWD using desalinated water while reducing their pumping from the Delta – that reduction is what Zone 7 would then use. Leveraging Zone 7's participation in the [Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Project](#), another option would be to store the desalinated water in the reservoir, thus taking advantage of the additional storage and new conveyance that project provides.

Q.

What is the timeline?

A.

The project is still in the planning phase, and currently there is no formally approved project. Should a desalination project be approved — which would occur after securing the necessary environmental review, permits, and agreements — it could be in service in just under 10 years.

A water rights study was completed in June 2020 to evaluate the opportunities and risks of using CCWD's existing water rights at Mallard Slough. It found that the ability to exchange desalinated and other types of water (e.g., Central Valley Project [CVP] water) among partners and to leverage storage in Los Vaqueros Reservoir could significantly influence the feasibility and yield of a desalination project.

Q.

What actions are being taken now and what are the next steps?

A.

A pilot water transfer in progress under the Bay Area Regional Reliability Shared Water Access Program will help address some of the questions raised by the June 2020 water rights study. The pilot water transfer involves a physical exchange of CVP water between Valley Water and CCWD using storage in Los Vaqueros Reservoir and requires review and approval by the US Bureau of Reclamation. The results of this pilot water transfer — expected to be completed in the next year or two — will inform the development of potential operational scenarios for a desalination project and refinement of estimates of water supplies that could be available to Zone 7 and other partners from such a project.

More information can be found at: <https://www.regionaldesal.org>

