



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Committee Item INFORMATION

Bay-Delta Resources

• Update on Webb Tract Rice Development & Wetland Restoration Projects

Summary

Metropolitan owns Webb Tract, a 5,498-acre island located in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, Contra Costa County. The island can only be accessed by ferry. Metropolitan received a \$20.9 million grant from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy in 2023 to fund two projects on Webb Tract: a rice development and wetland restoration project. The projects align with the Board's Bay-Delta policies to limit land subsidence that safeguards Metropolitan's water supply reliability, reduce levee vulnerabilities, promote financial stability, advance restoration of the Delta's ecosystem, and strengthen climate resiliency. Implementation of these projects is not expected to affect Metropolitan's ability to sell Webb Tract in the future.

Regarding the Webb Tract Rice Development Project, in August 2025, Metropolitan's Board authorized entering into a lease agreement to grow rice on the island. Lease negotiations are ongoing and expected to be completed in November 2025. Due to the delay in securing the lease and the early rains in Northern California, the farmer tenant is planning to plant a minimum of 800 acres of rice in Spring 2027.

The Webb Tract Wetland Restoration Project (wetland project) is wrapping up final design. In July 2025, Metropolitan determined that the wetland project qualified for a California Environmental Quality Act Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP) through the Cutting the Green Tape Initiative. The California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) issued the required concurrence for the wetland project SERP in July 2025. In August 2025, the Delta Stewardship Council concurred that the wetland project was not a covered action under the Delta Reform Act, so no certification of consistency with the Delta Plan is needed. Permit applications have been submitted to CDFW (through the new Cutting the Green Tape Restoration Management Permit process), the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. All permit applications are in process with the exception of the USFWS due to the ongoing federal government shutdown.

Once all permits are received, permit conditions will be incorporated into the final design package. The wetland project contractor bid solicitation is expected to be released in December 2025. Staff anticipates the Board's consideration of an action item to award the wetland construction contract in Spring 2026. If approved, construction is expected to begin in late Spring of 2026.

Purpose

Informational