



SENATE OFFICE OF RESEARCH

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shed and directed by the Senate Committee on Rules, the Senate Office of Research (SOR) serves as the bipartisan, strategic research and planning unit for the Senate. SOR produces major policy reports, issue briefs, background information on legislation and, occasionally, sponsors symposia and conferences.

Any Senator or Senate committee may request SOR's research, briefing and consulting services. Resulting reports are not always released to the public.

MAJOR PROJECTS:

Study in Progress: Low Voter Turnout. SOR staff are currently conducting a comprehensive study of low voter turnout in California elections. The focus is on institutional barriers and how those barriers impact historically disenfranchised groups. The study will involve a survey of available literature, a public poll, and hearings tentatively scheduled for September.

Preliminary Investigation of San Joaquin River Quality and Its Implications for Drinking Water Exports to Southern California (January 1987) is the result of a comprehensive, highly technical SOR-funded study conducted by the Energy and Resources Group of the University of California.

A major focus of the study was the long-term water quality impact of continued agricultural discharges into the San Joaquin Basin. The report indicates that "increased pollutant loading into the San Joaquin River and/or saturation of biological and chemical removal processes within San Joaquin and Delta Channels will have negative impacts" on the quality of State Water Projects (SWP) exports to southern California. In other words, the future quality of drinking water supplied to southern California via the California Aqueduct is likely to worsen, in part because of agricultural discharges, including pesticides and other toxics.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations, including the following:

- Because of the need to understand the seasonal distribution of toxic trace element fluxes in the San Joaquin River, the Department of Water Resources or the State Water Resources Control Board should continue the

present biweekly monitoring of San Joaquin inflows.

- Recent refinements and improvements in field and laboratory techniques by water monitoring agencies should be continued and strengthened. The report notes that a special area of concern is the development of proper quality control procedures within certain agency and contractor laboratories.

- Field data should be collected "to clarify certain basic hydrologic unknowns" in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, facilitating a better understanding of water movements.

