

Press Release

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Salton Sea Threatened by IID Vote

Environmental groups today cautioned that the Salton Sea should not suffer for Monday night's 3-2 vote by the Imperial Irrigation District Board of Directors not to transfer water from the Imperial Valley to San Diego. Today, nearly one million birds -- of more than one hundred different species -- are at the Salton Sea, ignorant of the impending threat to their valuable habitat.

"IID's vote on Monday night is not the end of the story," said Michael Cohen, Senior Associate with the Pacific Institute. "The danger is that the federal government will reduce deliveries to IID, or that IID or the farmers will cut a back-room deal, either of which could dramatically cut inflows to the Salton Sea, killing fish and birds."

"Cutting inflows to the Salton Sea would also affect public health, as more dust will blow into the Coachella and Imperial Valleys," said Karen Douglas, Natural Resources Director of the Planning and Conservation League. "To minimize public health and environmental impacts, any action to take water from IID must not affect the Sea."

"There will be no peace on the Colorado River or in the Salton Sea basin until the Department of the Interior carries out its long-term responsibility to protect and restore the Salton Sea," stated Kim Delfino, California Program Director, Defenders of Wildlife. "The concerns about how a water transfer will affect the Sea have been magnified a thousand times because the federal government has shirked its responsibility to address the Sea."

"The Legislature directed the California Resources Agency to develop restoration alternatives for the Sea back in August, but Resources has yet to respond," added Karen Douglas. "The State has to take the lead to come up with a sustainable, long-term plan for the Salton Sea. This issue is not going to go away until they do."

"IID has not made many friends with its recent vote," said Michael Cohen. "But in the rush to punish IID, the Salton Sea shouldn't be made to suffer."

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More information: http://www.pacinst.org/salton_sea.html