

News

COUNCIL OKS FUNDS FOR DELTA PUMPING

By **David Siders**
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STOCKTON - The City Council awarded \$184 million in contracts Tuesday to build the Delta Water Supply Project, Stockton's bid to pump drinking water from the Delta.

It is the largest public works project ever undertaken by City Hall.

"This is one of the most important days in Stockton history," Municipal Utilities Director Mark Madison said.

The project is to divert 33,000 acre-feet of water annually from the San Joaquin River. The council's action Tuesday allocated most of the project's estimated \$217 million cost. The council has endorsed the project for years and in July ordered water rates raised to pay for it.

Construction will begin next month, and the project is to be operational by February 2012, Madison said. It was once expected to be operational this year but was delayed in part because of the city's inability until recently to obtain permits to build and operate it.

The project is to pump water from the San Joaquin River in northwest Stockton to a treatment plant north of Eight Mile Road and west of Lower Sacramento Road. From there, the water is to be piped to homes, relaxing Stockton's reliance on groundwater and water from east of Stockton and serving new development, officials said.

"It's important for the future of Stockton," City Manager Gordon Palmer said.

The project has had little opposition, in part because the Municipal Utilities Department's budget is separate from the general fund, the account at the center of Stockton's financial crisis.

The council voted 7-0 to pay CDM Constructors Inc., a Rancho Cucamonga arm of Cambridge, Mass.-based CDM Inc., \$166.5 million to build a water treatment plant and pipeline, and to pay Preston Pipelines Inc. of Milpitas \$16.2 million to build an intake and pump station at the river. It voted to pay Phoenix-based Carollo Engineers \$1.6 million for construction management and inspection services.

Officials said the project will put almost \$80 million into the local economy, including labor and materials.

The only member of the public to address the council on the subject Tuesday was Bobby Bivens, president of the Stockton branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He called on the city and CDM Constructors Inc. to employ minorities.

Mayor Ann Johnston said the project will involve opportunities for "a lot of people" throughout the city.

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