



SAVE  
THE **STAN**



SOUTH SAN JOAQUIN  
IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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## Districts applaud Bureau of Reclamation lawsuit; believe state overstepped in water plan

The Oakdale and South San Joaquin Irrigation Districts applaud the lawsuits filed March 28, 2019, in state and federal court by the U.S. Department of Justice objecting to the California's water quality control plan and its direct impacts to the operations and congressional directives for New Melones Reservoir on the Stanislaus River.

"We have always believed the state water board was asserting too much control over a federal reservoir by dictating operations counter to federal intent," stated Steve Knell, OID's general manager. "Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman stated as much in her letter to the water board in 2018 and we're pleased they brought suit."

New Melones Dam is owned and operated by the federal Bureau of Reclamation. The reservoir stores water from the Stanislaus River basin under permits issued by the state of California, and delivers water from storage to irrigation and water districts under contracts entered into under federal reclamation law or in satisfaction of senior water rights on the river. OID and SSJID receive water supplies from the Bureau of Reclamation as part of their pre-1914 adjudicated water rights on the river.

"SSJID appreciates the Department of Interior's decision to challenge the State Water Resources Control Board's plan," said Peter Rietkerk, SSJID's general manager. "Environmental and human water supply needs from the Stanislaus River hinge on a sustainable operation of New Melones. Unfortunately, the state's current plan does not offer a sustainable operation, nor balance the river's complex water supply needs. The district's echo Interiors concern about the impact of the state's plan and hope a more balance solution will emerge through the state's voluntary settlement process."

**About Us:** The [South San Joaquin Irrigation District](#) was established in 1909 and is located in Manteca. It provides agricultural irrigation water to about 55,000 acres in Escalon, Ripon and Manteca. In 2005, the district expanded into providing domestic water service to selected cities within its territory. The [Oakdale Irrigation District](#) was created in 1909 and provides agricultural water to about 62,000 acres in northeastern Stanislaus County and southeastern San Joaquin County.

OID and SSJID hold senior water rights on the Stanislaus River. For more than 100 years, our agencies have responsibly delivered surface water to farms in San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties, and for SSJID,

thousands of homes in San Joaquin County. We are committed to sensible water policies, innovative irrigation techniques, prudent conservation practices, and important investments in biological studies of the river and fish habitat.

Save the Stan is a public education effort by SSJID and OID to inform Californians about the threat posed by increased flows on the Stanislaus River. For more information, go to [www.savethestan.org](http://www.savethestan.org) or our [Facebook page](#).