



## WATER RESOURCES AGENCY

# MEMORANDUM

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Monterey County

**DATE:** March 17, 2017

**TO:** Legislative Committee  
**FROM:** Robert Johnson, Deputy General Manager  
**SUBJECT:** White Bass Legislative Solution Strategy

As a follow-up to the Legislative Committee meeting where a Legislative Solution for the Interlake Tunnel and Spillway Modification Project (Project) white bass issue was discussed, the Agency is proposing a strategy to move forward with, and is seeking the support of the Legislative Committee.

The Agency has been working with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) since 2015 for an acceptable solution to the movement of white bass issue; movement of live white bass from Lake Nacimiento is prohibited by Fish and Game Code and State Legislation. Agency consultants have designed a “deepwater intake” for the Project, that would (at a minimum) cost \$5 million. The “deepwater intake” does not provide 100% containment of white bass, meaning that incidental movement of white bass from Lake Nacimiento to Lake San Antonio could occur. Currently though, without the Project, white bass are able to escape from Lake Nacimiento during flood control release events, leaving the lake from either the high-level gates, or by going over the spillway. So, even without the Project, white bass can and are escaping from Lake Nacimiento into the Nacimiento River and moving to the Salinas River, which is habitat for and a movement corridor for threatened Central Coast Steelhead. White bass are known to prey on steelhead.

With the Project in place, water will be moved from Lake Nacimiento to Lake San Antonio, thus reducing escape opportunities for white bass; it is predicted that spill events from Nacimiento will be reduced 60% with the Project in place.

For multiple reasons, including trying to keep costs down, the Agency is looking to a Legislative Solution strategy that would amend the Agency Act to allow the incidental movement of white bass from Lake Nacimiento to Lake San Antonio via the Project, thus exempting the Agency from Fish and Game Code 6400 and 6400.5. This legislation would be put in place to eliminate the need to build the “deepwater intake”, which is not a 100% containment solution to the movement issue, and would result in a minimum reduction in Project costs of \$5 million.