**WATER DESK SCRIPT**

**TITLE: SALTON SEA DUST**

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|  | **Seventeen years ago, irrigation authorities here in this highly productive agricultural county in California’s southern desert agreed to send a portion of its Colorado River water to nearby cities.** **NAT****This made farms more water efficient but also meant that less water would drain into the Salton Sea, the state’s largest lake, causing it to shrink.** |
| Frank RuizAudubon California | Sot (Ruiz) –“As the lake is receding, it will expose a lot of lake bed, and the sediment is gonna become airborne and it will effect more than 650,000 people who live in proximity to this body of water. “   |
|  | **The more dry lakebed is exposed, the more dust is picked up by the wind.** |
| Jessica HumesImperial Irrigation District | SOT – “The dust particles themselves are so fine, they could potentially get into your lungs and cause respiratory issues.” |
| Bob SchettlerImperial Irrigation District |

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| SOT – “Imperial County already has 3 times the state average of childhood asthma.  As particles get into the air, it creates a serious problem.  More people in the hospital, more people are getting sick, so it really needs a lot of attention.”  |

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| Camila BautistaSalton Sea Resident | “My impression has always been to steer clear, you don't want to live near here because people are getting asthma, and it smells really bad.” |
|  | **State authorities have agreed to restore the sea, but funding issues and red tape have stalled the project for more than 15 years.** |
| Chris SchonemanFish & Wildlife Service | “The state of California has plans for restoration. Building levees, berms to reflood that area that has been left high and dry.” |
|  | **Local authorities are taking measures to reduce the dust.** |
| Bob SchettlerImperial Irrigation District | “What we have done is we cut deep furrows perpendicular to the Salton Sea and as the wind blows those particles, some of them at least will fall into these furrows and out of circulation in the air bringing the level of contamination in the air down.” |
|  | **The dust is only expected to worsen on the Salton Sea, and protecting public health here will demand even more attention in the years ahead.** |
|  |  **Lindsay Fendt, reporting for The Water Desk** |
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