

# U.S. may increase pumping from biggest water project

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The Trump administration said Friday it will look at revving up water deliveries to farmers from California's Central Valley Project, the largest federal water project in the United States, in what environmental groups called a threat to protections for struggling native salmon and other endangered species.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation formally served notice it would begin looking at changing the operation of the massive California water project to maximize water deliveries. Spokeswoman Erin Curtis called it the first

step in what would likely be an 18-month analysis.

The water project is a network of 18 dams and reservoirs and 500 miles of canals and aqueducts that draw water from the delta of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, which are part of the largest estuary on the West Coast of the Americas.

Launched in the 1930s, the water project has helped make California's Central Valley the United States' richest farm region. It also has contributed to driving several once-plentiful species of smelt, salmon and other native animals toward

extinction, biologists and environmental groups say.

Doug Obegi, a senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council environmental group, contended in an email Friday the move represented "the latest attempt by the Trump administration to roll back protections for salmon and other endangered native fisheries ... in order to increase water supplies" for the state's agricultural water agencies.

Curtis, the Reclamation spokeswoman, called the effort a priority for the current administration.

Cutbacks of water

deliveries for the project's customers during the recently ended five-year California drought — including cutbacks prompted by rules protecting endangered native species also struggling in the drought — helped prompt the decision to look at possibly redoing the rules for operating the water project, Curtis said.

So did new U.S. legislation last year that encouraged more big water construction projects and water deliveries for Western farmers, Curtis said.

Federal authorities will seek public comment through Feb. 1.



AP Photo/Russel A. Daniels, File  
In this Oct. 2, 2009 photo, in California's Westland Water District of the Central Valley, canals carry water to southern California. The Trump administration says it will look at ramping up water deliveries to farmers from California's massive and environmentally sensitive Central Valley Project.

# Milestone-shattering run in 2017

U.S. stocks soar for best year since 2013

By ALEX VEIGA  
AP Business Writer

Taken a look at your stock portfolio lately? It's a good bet it's racked up solid gains for the year.

Wall Street has taken stock investors on a mostly smooth, record-shattering ride in 2017. The major stock indexes made double-digit gains for the year, led by Apple, Facebook and other technology stocks.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index, the broadest measure of the stock market, had its best year since 2013.

"This would go in the category of stellar year, with very little volatility in the market and pullbacks that were essentially minor," said Quincy Krosby, chief market strategist at Prudential Financial.

Several factors kept the market on an upward grind for most of the year and repeatedly drove stock indexes to all-time highs. The global economy rebounded, while the U.S. economy and job market continued to strengthen, which helped drive strong corporate earnings growth.

Investors also drew encouragement from the Trump administration's and Republican-led Congress' push to slash corporate taxes, roll back regulations and enact other pro-business policies. Congress passed the \$1.5 trillion tax overhaul bill, which reduces corporate taxes from 35 percent to 21 percent, last week.

The S&P 500 index finished the year with a gain of 19.4 percent, more than double its increase in 2016. The index has notched 62 record highs so far this year.

Including dividends, the S&P 500's total return was 21.8 percent, as of late Friday.



AP Photo/Richard Drew, File  
In this Friday, June 23, 2017, photo, trader Michael Milano, right, works in the crowd during the Russell rebalance on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange at the close of trading.

That means if you invested \$1,000 in an S&P 500 index fund at the beginning of the year you'd wind up with about \$1,218 at the end of the year.

Other major market indexes also were on course to deliver solid gains. The Dow Jones industrial average gained 25.1 percent. The 30-company average set 71 all-time highs as it sped from just under 20,000 points to past the 24,000 mark.

The Nasdaq composite did even better and climbed 28.2 percent. The tech-heavy index blew past the 6,000-point mark for the first time in April.

Small-company stocks, which trounced the rest of the market in 2016, got a boost this year as investors bet that the companies would be big beneficiaries of a corporate tax cut bill. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks gained 13.1 percent.

The market's gains have been broad, with seven of the 11 sectors in the S&P 500 closing in on double-digit gains, led by technology, which soared 36.9 percent. Only energy stocks and

phone companies took losses for the year.

For the most part, markets overseas also fared better this year than in 2016.

In Europe, Britain's market closed the year with a gain of 7.6 percent. Indexes in Germany and France finished 2017 with gains of 12.5 percent and 9.3 percent, respectively. Japan's Nikkei and Hong Kong's benchmark index notched gains of 19.1 percent and 36 percent, respectively.

The gains in overseas markets reflect how economies in Japan, Europe, China and many developing nations began growing in tandem with the U.S. for the first time in a decade.

The U.S. lagged the rest of those economies early in the year, but caught up by summer and delivered GDP growth of 3.1 percent in the second quarter and a 3.3 percent gain in the third, its fastest rate in three years.

"We hadn't seen that kind of growth all together in a long time," said Paul Christopher, head of global market strategy for Wells

Fargo Investment Institute. "We had a pretty strong third quarter and we're going to have a pretty strong fourth quarter, too."

In 2016, S&P 500 companies increased earnings by 0.4 percent. Through the first three quarters of 2017, earnings climbed about 11 percent from a year earlier, said Lindsey Bell, investment strategist at CFRA Research.

Those stronger earnings are a key reason why the S&P kept climbing, as stock prices tend to track corporate profits over the long term.

The market rode out many negative headlines in 2017.

North Korea tested a ballistic missile for the first time in July. Then, reportedly, a hydrogen bomb in August. Major hurricanes slammed into Texas, Louisiana and Florida. And Congressional Republicans' failed attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act fueled worries on Wall Street that the Trump administration's plans for a sweeping corporate tax cut and other pro-business policies would be delayed or derailed entirely.

# Trump trains crosshairs on favorite target, again — Bezos and Amazon

By JOSEPH PISANI  
AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK — President Donald Trump returned to a favorite target Friday, saying that Amazon.com should be charged more by the U.S. Postal Service for the packages it sends around the world.

Amazon has been a consistent recipient of Trump's ire. He has accused the company of failing to pay "internet taxes," though it's never been made clear by the White House what the president means by that.

In a tweet Friday, Trump said Amazon should be charged "MUCH MORE" by the post office because it's "losing many billions of dollars a year" while it makes "Amazon richer."

Amazon lives and dies by shipping, and an increase in the rates it pays could certainly do some damage. Amazon sends packages via the post office, FedEx, UPS and other services.

In the seconds after the tweet, shares of Amazon, which had been trading higher before the opening bell, began to fade and went into negative territory. The stock closed down more than 1 percent Friday. Broader markets also slipped.

Amazon was founded by Jeff Bezos, who also owns *The Washington Post*. The *Post*, as well as other major media, has been labeled as "fake news" by Trump after reporting unfavorable developments during his campaign and presidency.

He has labeled Bezos' *Post* the "AmazonWashingtonPost."

The Seattle company did not respond to a request for comment Friday. A spokeswoman for the Postal Service said, "We're looking into it."

Between July and September, Amazon paid \$5.4 billion in worldwide shipping costs, a 39 percent increase from the same

period in the previous year. That amounts to nearly 11 percent of the \$43.7 billion in total revenue it reported in that same period.

In 2014, Amazon reached a deal with the Postal Service to offer delivery on Sundays.

Trump has also attacked U.S. corporations not affiliated in any way with the news media.

Just over a year ago, he tweeted "Boeing is building a brand new 747 Air Force One for future presidents, but costs are out of control, more than \$4 billion. Cancel order!"

Shares of Boeing Co. gave up almost 1 percent when trading opened that day, but recovered.

Several days later, and again on Twitter, he said that Lockheed-Martin, which is building the F-35 fighter jet, was "out of control." Its shares tumbled more than 5 percent, but they too recovered.

The Postal Service has lost money for 11 straight years, mostly because of pension and health care costs.

One part of the operation that is not suffering, however, is shipping and packages, which handles Amazon and other online orders from retailers. In the year that ended Sept. 30, the postal service reported higher-than-expected revenue of \$19.5 billion, "due to e-commerce growth."

The post office does not break down what is driving that growth, but online orders from retailers, particularly Amazon.com, has revolutionized the way goods are bought and delivered. Analysts at Bain & Co. expected Amazon to capture 50 percent of all online shopping growth during the holiday shopping season.

Amazon has taken some steps toward becoming more self-reliant in shipping. Earlier this year it announced that it would build a worldwide air cargo hub in Kentucky, about 13 miles southwest of Cincinnati.

# Walla Walla bank Baker Boyer announces round of promotions

East Oregonian

A number of promotions were recently approved by the Baker Boyer board of directors

Effective Jan. 1, they include Teresa Larson to executive vice president, Josh Allington to senior vice president, Russ Colombo to senior vice president, J.T. Lieuallen to vice president, Mark Lutch to vice president, Levi Waggoner to assistant vice president, Lora Zink to assistant vice

president, Jessica Long to assistant vice president and John Cunnison as vice president, chief investment officer

A number of the promotions are with personnel who have a decade or more experience with the bank, including Colombo with 39 years, Larson (35), Allington (19), Long (16), Zink (14), Cunnison (11) and Lieuallen (10).

"Seeing the growth of these individuals is testament to our culture of nurturing talent with in the bank and

our commitment to the communities we serve," said Mark Kajita, Baker Boyer president and CEO.

While most of the employees promoted reside in Walla Walla, Zink has ties to Milton-Freewater, where she was appointed as the branch manager in 2015. She is a current board member of Milton-Freewater Downtown Alliance, Milton-Freewater Area Chamber of Commerce, president of Community Development Partnership and a general member of the

Milton-Freewater Rotary. In addition, Lieuallen practiced law in Pendleton prior to joining the bank.

Established in 1869, Baker Boyer has a branch in Milton-Freewater as well as locations in Washington. For more information, visit [www.bakerboyer.com](http://www.bakerboyer.com).

**New Year, New You!**

Work for a company that recognizes and rewards exceptional work!

Save time and apply online: [sykes.com/jobs](http://sykes.com/jobs)

**SYKES**

OREGON RAISED THE MINIMUM LEGAL SALE AGE FOR TOBACCO **FROM 18 TO 21**

Enforcement begins Jan. 1, 2018

Oregon Health Authority

[healthoregon.org/tobaccoretailsales](http://healthoregon.org/tobaccoretailsales)