



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS OPPOSE BAY DELTA “CONSERVATION” PLAN

The Environmental Water Caucus, an organization of environmental, environmental justice, commercial and recreational fishing groups, and Native American tribes, has released a letter to federal and state officials demanding that they abandon their proposed plan to dig a pair of massive tunnels under the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta in order to transport Sacramento River water to the existing pumps at the south end of the Delta.

The proposal, called the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, has as its two main goals to reliably transport more water to San Joaquin farms and Southern California cities and to restore the fisheries and ecology of the Delta. It will do neither. It ignores numerous plans that have been put forth which will solve the Delta's purported "crisis" with less costs to ratepayers and the general public and with more ecological certainty.

Here are the issues pointed out in the Environmental Water Caucus' letter:

- It relies on an economic analysis that has illusionary benefits to justify the \$25B cost of the project and its expensive tunnels.
- There is a virtual certainty that the costs of a project this size will be exceeded, and that the ratepayers and the general public will be stuck with the cost overruns.
- The \$20B of direct project bond interest costs are not included in any cost estimates reported in public documents, as pointed out by a key state watchdog agency.
- There are earthquake protection alternatives which would cost \$10B less than the planned project tunnel alternative.
- The project science is biased and has been "cherry picked" to support the tunnels solution, as pointed out by state and federal fishery agencies.
- Delta habitat restoration proposals are being used that are scientifically questionable as fish recovery actions and are being used in place of increased flows of water through the Delta, which would have more certainty of success for fish and habitat.
- It is a plan that intends to export more water through the Delta at the same time that existing legal water claims and forecasted climate change-caused water supply reductions will not provide the water.
- There are no improvements to the existing fish screening facilities in the South Delta, which are notorious fish killers, and which will continue to be utilized under the current proposal.
- The recovery of threatened or endangered fish species and restoration of damaged habitats in the Delta do not require the construction of the tunnels. In fact the tunnels will be particularly disruptive to the Delta habitats, including the nesting territory of iconic Sandhill Cranes.

Clearly, the current BDCP proposal is unnecessary and will have severe environmental consequences. It will not accomplish the claimed biological and species recovery objectives and would be a costly mistake if implemented. The current BDCP project should be reoriented to reduce exports, increase outflows, and implement the necessary structural changes that will accomplish the goals of Delta recovery, improve water supply reliability, and reduce reliance on the Delta. The cumulative impact of the above critical flaws, contradictions, and omissions leave no choice for the public but to strongly oppose the current Bay Delta Conservation Plan.

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