FRIENDS OF THE RIVER
1418 20TH STREET, SUITE 100, SACRAMENTO, CA 95811
916/442-3155 • FAX: 916/442-3396 •
WWW.FRIENDSOFTHERIVER.ORG

CONTACT:

Bob Wright, Senior Counsel, Friends of the River
BWright@friendsoftheriver.org 916- 442-3155 X207

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 10, 2014

FRIENDS OF THE RIVER POSTS BDCP COMMENTS SUPPRESSED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Sacramento, CA – Friends of the River announced today that it is posting all comments made on the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) Water Tunnels project on its website, www.friendsoftheriver.org , under the heading *Bay Delta Conservation Plan Public Comment Library*. The federal and state agencies in charge of the project now refuse to post any correspondence other than project proponent material touting the Water Tunnels. It is imperative that public interest organizations, public agencies, and California citizens, taxpayers and ratepayers have access to comments made as they come in to assist them in spotting issues and formulating their own comments on the 40,000 pages of advocacy--the Plan and draft EIR/EIS--touting the BDCP Water Tunnels. The government agencies declare they will not make the comments "available to the public" until "the release of the Final EIR/EIS." That concealment of the comments until after the public review period has ended will be of no help to the public in formulating comments during the review period.

Friends of the River has been demanding copies of the comments from the government agencies under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Friends of the River (FOR) is posting the comments it has obtained regardless of whether the particular comment agrees or disagrees with FOR's support for saving the Sacramento River and San Francisco Bay-Delta and opposition to the Water Tunnels. FOR is now doing what the government of a free country should be-- but is not-- doing. That is, FOR is insuring that all sides of this important and controversial issue can be heard during this critical public review period.

The proposed BDCP Water Tunnels project that is the subject of the BDCP draft Plan and draft EIR/EIS is one of the most controversial and expensive public works projects in the history of the State of California. Back in June of 1982 a statewide referendum blocked development of the project (then called the "peripheral canal") by a 2 to 1 vote. The Water Tunnels raise profound environmental issues under several laws including the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Water Act, and California Environmental Quality Act. With respect to economic issues, the only true statewide cost-benefit study of the project concluded that the costs would exceed the benefits by 2.5 to 1, so that the project does not make economic or financial sense.

FRIENDS OF THE RIVER
1418 20TH STREET, SUITE 100, SACRAMENTO, CA 95811
916/442-3155 • FAX: 916/442-3396 •
WWW.FRIENDSOFTHERIVER.ORG

Bob Wright, Senior Counsel for Friends of the River, said "The BDCP Water Tunnels project is in reality a dagger aimed at the hearts of the Sacramento River and the San Francisco Bay-Delta as well as a pickpocket after the wallets of California taxpayers and ratepayers. That is why the BDCP agencies are afraid to post the comments. They are afraid of the truth."

According to often repeated statements by Resources Agency Secretary John Laird and others, the BDCP development process would be fair, open, and transparent. Now the truth is even clearer than before that special interests--not the public-- will decide the important issues behind closed doors and the public will only see what the BDCP proponents want it to see.
Serious questions have been raised about the financial feasibility and environmental consequences of the BDCP Water Tunnels. The project would re-route a large portion of the Sacramento River into massive underground tunnels, to the detriment of fish, wildlife and local uses of the River and the Delta. Public debate over such a destructive and expensive public works project is essential.

Informed public debate is the hallmark of our democracy. The modern equivalent of the venerable town hall/public park assembly is the ability to view comments from the public via the internet regarding proposed major governmental actions. Friends of the River will continue to post the comments on its website that it is obtaining from the government agencies with regular updates in mid - April, mid - May, and early June through the end of the public comment period, now scheduled to end June 13, 2014. Unlike the BDCP proponents, Friends of the River and other protectors of our rivers and the San Francisco Bay-Delta are not afraid of the truth or contrary points of view.

###