

JOHN GARAMENDI
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March 20, 2020

Ms. Karla Nemeth, Director
California Department of Water Resources
1416 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Environmental Impact Report for Delta Conveyance Project

Dear Director Nemeth:

I am deeply disappointed that the State of California is not examining a potential western route for the new Delta conveyance project. This is unacceptable. I urge you to reconsider, as part of the environmental planning process.

The map released with the “Notice of Preparation of the Environmental Impact Report for the Delta Conveyance Project” shows only two proposed routes: a “central tunnel corridor” and an “eastern tunnel corridor.” Any honest planning process under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) demands that state agencies evaluate *all* potentially feasible routes for any new Delta conveyance project and their impacts. Your CEQA process must include the western route utilizing existing conveyance infrastructure like the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel.

If your Department refuses to do this, then you owe Delta residents and the people of California an explanation in writing. You must explain when the decision was made to not consider the western route, by whom, and why. To my knowledge, no such explanation has been provided by the state to date. This raises serious concerns about a lack of public transparency.

Proponents of the now-defunct Twin Tunnels project also failed to seriously consider a western route. Instead, they spent more than \$280 million in pursuit of a multibillion-dollar boondoggle that will never be built. Enclosed are my May 8, 2019 letter to Governor Newsom and my February 7, 2020 public comment on the “draft Water Resilience Portfolio” outlining the numerous advantages of a western route for any new Delta conveyance project.

Governor Newsom’s executive order (N-10-19) issued on April 29, 2019, directed state agencies to reassess both the 2016 California Water Plan and “current planning to modernize conveyance through the Bay-Delta with a single new tunnel project.” I do not see how your Department can fulfill that gubernatorial directive without at least considering a western route as you prepare the environmental impact report for the Delta conveyance project.

Significant feasibility and scoping work for the western option has already been completed in the Department's November 2009 conceptual engineering report, as part of the state's then-Delta Habitat Conservation and Conveyance Program, and the analysis for the Bay-Delta Program (CALFED) in October 1997.

Any effort to modernize the Delta water system as directed in the Governor's executive order must include an honest and complete study of the western conveyance route. Again, I urge you to fully consider the western option and analyze its pros and cons relative to the "central tunnel corridor" and "eastern tunnel corridor" proposals in any final environmental impact report.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss these matters further. I submit this letter as part of the public scoping period for the Department's environmental planning process for the proposed Delta conveyance project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor of California
Secretary Wade Crowfoot, California Natural Resources Agency



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February 7, 2020

Secretary Wade Crowfoot
California Natural Resources Agency

Secretary Jared Blumenfeld
California Environmental Protection Agency

Secretary Karen Ross
California Department of Food and Agriculture

Dear Secretaries Crowfoot, Blumenfeld, and Ross:

I welcome this opportunity to formally comment on the draft Water Resilience Portfolio developed pursuant to Governor Newsom's executive order (N-10-19). As a former state legislator, Deputy Secretary of the Interior during the Clinton Administration, and Lieutenant Governor, I am very pleased to see the state refocus on meeting California's long-term water needs.

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Delta Conveyance:

I am pleased that the draft Water Resilience Portfolio reaffirmed the Governor's commitment to abandon the Twin Tunnels (WaterFix) project and consider alternatives. Unfortunately, the planning and scoping process for the now-defunct Twin Tunnels failed to adequately consider a **western route** and instead focusing solely on the eastern alignment for the tunnels. On May 9, 2019, I wrote to Governor Newsom urging him to consider a smaller conveyance project along the westside of the Delta. In the letter, I outlined the following:

- Utilize the Port of West Sacramento and the Deep Water Ship Channel as the first segment of the western conveyance facility, by installing a fish screen and low-head pump at the existing lock on the Sacramento River and allow water to flow into the port and channel.

- Build a lock at the southern end of the Ship Channel 25 miles south near Rio Vista to separate the Sacramento River water in the channel from the water and species in the Delta, thereby safeguarding smelt or other endangered fish from entrainment in the pump located north of the lock. This ship lock would also provide passage for ships transiting to the Port of West Sacramento.

- Construct a pressurized pipeline, sized between 3,000 to 4,000 cubic feet per second (CFS), from the pump north of the ship lock to carry water to three new reservoirs (Bacon Island, Holland Tract, and Webb Tract) in the central Delta, which are already owned by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and could be permitted for water storage. These islands are strategically lined up to provide direct access to the pumps for the Central Valley and State Water Projects near Tracy. An alternative is to locate the pipeline along the eastside of the Old River channel to the Tracy pumps.

Locating the conveyance facility on the **west side** of the Delta and using existing conveyance, wherever possible, may prove to be less expensive and certainly would avoid the eastern alignment's damaging impacts on historic communities, the fragile Delta ecosystem, and productive agricultural land. The western alignment would result in less land subsidence and flood risk.

Any effort to modernize the Delta water system must include an honest and complete study of the western conveyance route. Attention must be paid to the November 2009 conceptual engineering report completed for the Department of Water Resources on the western isolated conveyance facility. This 2009 report was part of the state's Delta Habitat Conservation and Conveyance Program. As noted in the report, an analysis for a proposed conveyance project along the western perimeter of the Delta utilizing the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel was also completed in October 1997 for the Bay-Delta Program (CALFED) and found to be viable.

The eastside canal option contemplated in these state documents was the infamous "Peripheral Canal," which was soundly rejected by California voters in a 1982 ballot referendum (Proposition 9). In subsequent years, the open canal and eastside route became the extraordinarily expensive Twin Tunnels (WaterFix) project.

Proponents of the now-defunct Twin Tunnels failed to seriously consider a **westside route**, instead spending more than \$280 million in pursuit of a multibillion-dollar boondoggle that will never be built. This money could have funded much-needed upgrades and repairs to key Delta levees that provide the channel through which water flows to the Tracy pumps for the Central Valley and State Water Projects.

The existing water supply system and every proposed alternative depend upon these levees and channels for most of the water pumped from the Delta estuary. These key Delta levees must be maintained.

As you finalize the Water Resilience Portfolio, I urge you to carefully consider an alternative route along the westside of the Delta as detailed on pages 7-14 of my enclosed “Little Sip, Big Gulp: A Water Plan for All of California.” Much of the feasibility and scoping work for this western option has already been done for you by the state in the Much of the feasibility and scoping work for this western option has already been done for you by the state in the aforementioned documents and analyses.

I stand ready to work with you to advance a westside route that meets our state’s future water needs and safeguards the Delta.

Sincerely,



JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress

CC: Director Karla Nemeth, California Department of Water Resources

Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA)