



September 17, 2019

Subject: Recommendation on the Delta Conveyance Project

Addressees (via Email):

Chris Dahlstrom, General Manager, SYRWCD, ID-1
Joan Hartmann, Third District Supervisor, Santa Barbara County
Rose Hess, Buellton Public Works Director
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Ray Stokes, Executive Director, Central Coast Water Authority

As you may know, the purpose of WE Watch is to work together to sustain and improve the environment of the Santa Ynez Valley, mainly by educating our members and the community about environmental issues affecting the quality of life in our Valley. Since water issues are such an important part of the Valley environment, we formed a Water Issues Group over three years ago.

As a part of that group's work, we examined the Delta Conveyance Project (DCP) which has recently been formed by the State, subsequent to Governor Newsom's cancellation of the twin tunnel Water Fix Project. Although there is not yet a Project Description for the new single tunnel DCP, based on plans and information from the previous Water Fix, we reached the conclusion that the DCP is not a project Santa Ynez Valley agencies and Santa Barbara County should support. **We recommend that your agency "Opt-Out" of participation in the project.** The reasons that we recommend this action are similar to some of the reasons the Governor cancelled the Water Fix Project. Those reasons include:

1. The high costs of the DCP – perhaps \$14 Billion, not including the costs of new supporting surface storage.
 - The up-front share of costs to the Central Coast Water Authority is estimated to be in the \$152 million range, which will be a direct pass through set of costs to Santa Barbara County rate payers. To a city like Solvang it will be in the \$6 million range; for Buellton, \$3 million; and for ID#1, \$11 million (which includes Solvang's share). More precise costs cannot be determined since, as previously noted, there is not yet an official Project Description for the DCP. And as usual for a project of this size, we can expect those cost estimates to rise.
 - Additionally, there are numerous lesser cost alternatives that are currently available for water quality improvements, for infrastructure improvements to mitigate climate change impacts and the threat of earthquakes, for the increased use of ground water storage, and for a portfolio of regional water conservation, sustainable desalination, recycling, and water demand reduction programs.
2. The questionable improvements in water reliability.

- As we have seen so clearly during the past decades, the reliability of DWR's State Water Project allocations is inherently variable and unpredictable from year to year, mainly due to California's annual variations in rainfall.
 - Furthermore, in order to achieve DWR's highly questionable estimates of improved water reliability from the DCP, significant increases in surface storage would be required. The likelihood of major new surface storage in the foreseeable future is doubtful and the costs make it impractical, to say nothing about the adverse environmental impacts of further surface storage.
3. The continuation of adverse environmental impacts in the Delta.
- The desired DCP increase in exports will continue to aggravate and undoubtedly worsen endangered species and habitat conditions. Taking more water out of the Delta cannot possibly help fishery and habitat conditions.
 - New tunnel intakes at the north Delta will deprive the Delta of high quality Sacramento River mixing water that currently improves Delta water quality. It will also allow sea level rise to bring additional saline water further into the Delta. Conversely, increasing flows through the Delta and into San Francisco Bay rather than through a tunnel will diminish salt water intrusion and improve Delta water quality.
 - The loss of significant fresh water flows through the Delta will degrade the current healthy Delta farming and recreational economies. The Delta environment should not be sacrificed in order to satisfy Southern California interests.
4. Our recommendation is partly based on the past unreliability of Department of Water Resources' estimates and practices related to costs, water reliability, and schedule accomplishments.

We hope you will follow our recommendation and we would be happy to have further discussions if you feel it necessary.



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