



Delta Counties Coalition

Contra Costa County | Sacramento County | San Joaquin County | Solano County | Yolo County
"Working together on water and Delta issues."

Delta Counties Say Final Environmental Impact Report Notice of Determination is Disappointing, Deficient and Destructive

For Immediate Release

December 21, 2023

Contact: Elisia De Bord
deborde@saccounty.gov
(916) 874-4627

In response to Department of Water Resources (DWR) certifying the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and approving the Delta Conveyance Project, Patrick Hume, Chair of the Delta Counties Coalition (DCC), made the following statement on behalf of the five jurisdictions that would be most negatively impacted by the controversial Delta Tunnel megaproject:

As the DCC previously stated when this 27,000+ Final EIR was released on December 8th, this proposed Tunnel project continues to be based on last century thinking and merely moves water from the north to the south without adding any new water to the system. It is a deeply flawed plan that does not improve statewide water supplies and would unfairly sacrifice the Delta region, and harm California's economy.

It is crystal clear that the Administration hasn't properly considered Delta community interests. If DWR had done that, it would have listened to Delta policymakers and stakeholders who have the most to lose if a destructive Delta Conveyance Project is rammed through this National Heritage Area and its legacy communities.

This 16-year, \$16+ billion ratepayer-funded megaproject would no doubt cause grave environmental and ecological impacts in the Delta. It would also have negative economic, social, and security impacts on California residents in the Bay-Delta region and beyond – especially those in underserved communities where water quality and quantity are at stake.

The Delta Tunnel would not provide a resilient and reliable statewide water supply or address the reality of climate change and years of extended droughts with sporadic flood events. In fact, this disastrous Tunnel project would not provide a new source of water to our already over-drafted system. The Tunnel has zero ability to make or store new water.

Tunnel proponents also must stop using false statements that the Tunnel would protect water supplies in the event of an earthquake, when there has been no evidence that past earthquakes have caused damage to existing water infrastructure.

This is just another example that the state will say anything to justify this ill-fated project, regardless of its damaging effects.

This Delta Tunnel fight is far from over. There are still over a dozen major State and Federal actions that would need to be taken in order for this project to move forward, and that doesn't account for the legal challenges at every step of the way. In reality, any Delta conveyance is decades away from being built and, in the meantime, the State is doing very little to meaningfully address critical needs to improve existing deficient water infrastructure.

The State must change its focus from a Tunnel that won't create any new water and would destroy the Delta and instead, take more productive actions now like maintaining and improving the Delta levee system, developing sensible above and below ground storage, and building additional water projects to conserve and reuse water throughout the state. If the same energy were devoted to these actions instead of on the controversial Tunnel, California could have made genuine progress in addressing water sustainability and reliability.

There is still time for the state to correct its "Tunnel vision" and re-focus efforts on projects that can secure resilient, equitable, long-term water supplies while preserving natural resources for future generations. The question is, does the State have the common sense and cooperative spirit to do so?"

The Delta Counties Coalition (DCC) is an alliance of the California Counties of Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo. The DCC works to give one voice to the Delta. The DCC has three goals: improve the Delta ecosystem, provide a more reliable water supply for the State, and protect and enhance Delta communities. The DCC works with local, state, and federal stakeholders to develop and implement solutions that address California's water issues in a comprehensive, sustainable manner. For more information about the DCC and its solutions to a Delta Tunnel visit savethedelta.saccounty.gov.

###