

Max Overland

Subject: The Delta Conveyance Project is a bad deal for Valley Water

From: Karen Jacques <threegables1819@gmail.com>
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To: Board of Directors <board@valleywater.org>
Subject: The Delta Conveyance Project is a bad deal for Valley Water

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Dear Santa Clara Valley Water District Board Members

I'm writing to you because I believe the Delta Conveyance Project (DCP) is a bad deal for Valley Water and for other water agencies that are considering whether to buy into it. It's a multi-billion dollar boondoggle with no guarantees. It has the potential to significantly increase water rates and provide little or no benefit at a time when many people are already struggling to pay their water bills.

The recent Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) the state provided estimates that the DCP will cost approximately \$20.1 billion to build, will take roughly 16 years to build and will provide a reliable source of additional water once built. The most estimate does not include the cost of interest that will need to be paid on the bonds and there is no way to know exactly what that rate will be until the bonds are issued. What we do know is that the \$20.1 billion figure assumes that construction will go smoothly and finish approximately on time. This is a big assumption given that projects of this magnitude almost always encounter delays and the costs of labor and materials almost always rise. It is also a big assumption given the risks that climate change poses to construction, These risks include extreme heat that makes it dangerous for crews to work, out of control wildfires and extreme rain often followed by floods and landslides California has experienced all of these and climate scientists tell us they will keep getting worse as long as green house gases keep rising. If any of them occur during construction the project will be slowed down. Then there is the fact that it will be necessary to acquire land to build the project. Such land acquisition will negatively impact some small farmers and the historic town of Hood. People don't usually let their livelihoods and the places they love be destroyed without a fight so this will likely trigger eminent domain and court battles. (Look what happened with eminent domain and high speed rail.)

Building and operating the DCP, will have major environmental costs that the BCA fails to consider. The Delta is already in severe ecological decline, much of it due to the amount of water that is currently being siphoned out of it and sent to various water districts. The DCP will speed that decline, worsen already poor water quality, increase toxic algal blooms and very likely drive several fish species, including coho salmon, to extinction. The salmon industry, which provides a livelihood for a large number of people, is already feeling the impacts of the Delta's decline and all salmon fishing has been shut down for the second year in a row. There is no way to adequately remediate the negative environmental impacts that the DCP will have on the Delta, These impacts weren't considered in the BCA, but should have been.

Even if the DCP gets built without too many costly overruns and delays, it can't guarantee rate payers a reliable supply of annual water. As the climate crisis worsens (which it will continue to do until the

powers that be get serious about putting a stop to fossil fuels) there may be years when drought is so severe that there will be no water to send anywhere. Additionally, the DCP accounts for only 45 miles of the distance that water has to travel to reach people in the Santa Clara Valley (or any other water district) If there is a significant earthquake or if some climate related catastrophe (e.g. floods and landslides) occurs anywhere along the entire water project route, no DCP water will be able to reach its' destination until repairs are made. Even if the DCP lasts 100 years, as the BCA estimates, that doesn't mean 100 years of reliable water delivery.

While the BCA paints a very rosy picture of the benefits of the DCP, it admits that costs could be as much as 80% higher than the projected \$20.1 billion. A cost overrun anywhere close to that would cause financial havoc. The Santa Clara Valley Water Board (and other water boards) would be much better off putting money into regional projects like water recycling, water conservation, drought tolerant landscaping and creating new areas for ground water absorption than into a multi-billion dollar, environmentally destructive state project that has such a high risk of failing. As the climate crisis worsens and extreme weather leads to more and more catastrophes, local resiliency is going to become more and more important. If you put all your money into the DCP, you likely won't be able to afford projects that can give you the resiliency that you need.

Thank-you for this opportunity to comment.

Karen Jacques