



## North Delta CARES Action Committee

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SENT VIA EMAIL ([Board@valleywater.org](mailto:Board@valleywater.org); [clerkoftheboard@valleywater.org](mailto:clerkoftheboard@valleywater.org))

January 25, 2016

SCWWD Board of Directors  
5750 Almaden Expressway  
San Jose, CA 95118

Re: Comments on January 26, 2016, Agenda Item 2.2. - Workshop on State Perspectives on California WaterFix and California EcoRestore

Dear Board Members:

North Delta CARES (Community Area Residents for Environmental Stability) represents many interests in the Sacramento San Joaquin River Delta. We have personally participated in the public process since 2009 that has led to the current Delta Tunnels/California WaterFix and the California EcoRestore proposals. Unfortunately, despite many people working to try to formulate a plan that would meet the 2009 Delta Reform Act coequal goals, among other criteria, the so-called solutions before you are deeply flawed.

This letter highlights just a few of the items with which we believe the District should be concerned with when considering its support and participation in the CWTunnels project. We have also included a few comments on the California EcoRestore for your consideration.

### The CWF Will Harm the Delta Environment

One of the main items in support of the CWF Tunnels by its proponents is that reverse flows will be lessened by the addition of diversion points in the North Delta. Yet the truth is that the construction and use of the Twin Tunnels would create additional and increased reverse flows in the North Delta. In particular, as a result of the project, Georgiana, Sutter and Steamboat Soughs, where we live, will experience increased in reverse flows, increasing salinity and hinder fish migration. The project does not restore a more natural flow for the Delta. This project simply brings reverse flow problems further into the north Delta.



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### The CWF Tunnels are Not Necessary to Make Santa Clara Valley Water District's Water Supplies More Secure

There are many ways to re-manage the California Water supply. We live next to the Delta levees where the CA WaterFix intends to divert more water from the Delta. Maintaining and upgrading the Delta levee system is one of the best ways to protect against possible water interruptions. The peer-reviewed Economic Sustainability Plan prepared by the Delta Protection Commission pointed out that a further-improved levee system would not only address the hazards to water exports posed by potential earthquakes but also would provide improved flood protection, would allow planting on the water side of levees to create shaded riparian habitat, and could be constructed for between \$2 to \$4 billion.

### The Tunnels are Not Necessary to Restore Ecosystem in the Delta

In fact, the tunnels will devastate the ecosystem in the Delta and restoration is considered mitigation for the twin tunnels project. The prior preferred alternative, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDOP) was intended to both improve water supplies as well as restore habitat as an HCP/NCCP. Because the BDOP project reconfiguration with the habitat component was not found to meet minimum Endangered Species Act (among others) standards, a Tunnels-only version of the BDOP was announced in Spring 2015. Reverse flows in the south Delta caused by the existing pumps have not been the major impediment to ecosystem restoration, including carrying out the inexplicably delayed restoration requirements in the 2008/2009 Biological Opinions. Moreover, under the Tunnels project, elimination of reverse flows in the south Delta would only occur when there is pumping in the north Delta. As explained above, if there is pumping from the north, reverse flows will occur there, basically moving the existing problem of reverse flows to the north Delta, and trading smelt impacts for salmon impacts.

Reverse flows are not the limitation on the success of habitat restoration, and no restoration is being planned in the vicinity of the current south Delta reverse flow problem. Limitations on restoration have more to do with the difficulty in recreating pre-reclamation conditions in the Delta (massive earthmoving, fill, excavation, etc.) without



The proposed California Water Fix and the current over pumping of the Delta are the largest transfer of public wealth to private resources in the history of California, and maybe in the history of the United States.

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The San Joaquin County alone is 40% of the Delta. There is a lot to lose if the proposed tunnels and over pumping of the Delta is allowed to continue. The Delta supports a \$5.2 billion annual agricultural industry, 40% of those farms are in the San Joaquin County but extend to where the intakes are proposed in Sacramento and Yolo Counties. They are diversified family farms that date six generations back and embrace sustainable farming practices, the majority of these farms are the state's cleanest zero-discharge farms.

Furthermore, the Delta is home to a \$750 million recreational economy. It is the nursery for a \$1.5 billion California salmon economy and is the fresh water source for all the crabs we eat at crab feeds from California fisheries. The tourism industry at Pier 39 in San Francisco is also tied to the health of the Delta.

Tens of thousands of people in five Delta counties, including San Joaquin, Solano, Sacramento, Yolo and Contra Costa Counties, are sustenance fishers; these include the low-income environmental justice communities such as the local Hmong, Laos, Cambodian, and Mexican populations in our five counties. These communities are dependent on Delta fish for their nutritional deficiencies and needs. Besides depleting the amount of fish in the Delta waters, the proposed Delta tunnels and over pumping will further exacerbate the issue of contamination of Delta fish that people consume.

Furthermore, the Delta tunnels will make the Stockton Delta water intake project inoperable because the water will be contaminated with salt water. The municipal utilities of Stockton, Lodi, and Tracy won't be able to discharge waste water without violating Federal water laws. Residents will be paying for new problems through projects with higher water bills.

Importantly, the Delta is a unique natural resource for recreation, including fishing, swimming, wine tasting, wind surfing, hiking, boating, camping and bird watching. We





cannot address public access as long as over pumping in the Delta is continuing. This cannot happen if two-thirds of the Delta's fresh water supply is diverted to unsustainable agriculture.

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Should we sacrifice the survival of the most magnificent estuary on the west coast of the Americas and the family farms in the Delta for unsustainable development of desert

almonds in Westland's Water District and Kern County farms? That is the choice all Californians and the Santa Clara Valley Water District face. Even farmers outside the Delta on the east side of the San Joaquin County need to stop the tunnels and the CA WaterFix project because if tunnels are built, their groundwater basin will turn to salt.

Far from helping resolve longstanding water conflicts, the Delta Tunnels ensure that conflicts will continue indefinitely into the future. If built, past experience tells us that the SMP/CVP's new ability to divert crucial Sacramento flows will be wielded irresponsibly in a way that harms both fish and wildlife and other beneficial users of water in the Delta. We ask your District to re-think your votes to making the Delta yet another sacrifice zone where the environment and communities are destroyed to provide water elsewhere.

We respect the water supply needs of your District and view Santa Clara as our neighbor. We do not believe it is acceptable, however, for your District to attempt to meet its water supply needs by impairing Delta water user's local supplies, and deprive the Delta of the freshwater flows that are essential to imperiled fish, farms, communities and the entire ecosystem. We believe that with the knowledge of its devastation to the Delta and its communities, that you will agree with us that there are better ways to improve water supply reliability in California. Please do not cooperate with efforts to sacrifice the Delta.

As soon as the CWF Delta Tunnels are abandoned once and for all, we will be able to move forward to work on better solutions. They have been identified and are awaiting cooperative efforts by all concerned Californians. We look forward to those discussions.

Thank you for the opportunity to give input from the communities and people living in the Delta!

Sincerely yours,



Anna Swenson and Barbara Daly  
Committee Members

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Cc: (via email).

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