

October 10, 2017

Santa Clara Valley Water Board
5750 Almaden Expressway, San Jose, CA 95118
Board@valleywater.orgBoard@valleywater.org

TO: Santa Clara Valley Water Board

Please vote against supporting Governor Brown's SF Bay Delta Tunnels (Water Fix) \$17 million project for our SCVWD. Following are some of the many reasons why this project is not a good fit for our District:

1. Instead of supporting the unknown Delta Tunnels Water Fix costs, support the use of tax payer money toward local water projects which could include: conservation, repair and maintenance of existing dams and percolation ponds, storm water capture, water harvesting from roofs (the average residential roof generates 25,000 gallons of water per year), recycling, sustainable curbs and gutters which clean street water. Also, protect and encourage appropriate large drought tolerant shade trees which reduce temperatures, reduce water needs and weeds, reduce pollution and global warming, and create healthy soil. Our community and water board could become a national and state leader on these issues. If we go in these directions, there would be Green Building Conference Tours and national and state newspaper and television recognition discussing your leadership. Most of the above suggestions are not currently being considered and addressed in our SCVWDB, our state water districts, and our state water leadership. At your August 22, 2017 Board meeting the community overwhelming supported your spending our valuable tax payer money on local water projects and not on the state's Delta Tunnels project.
2. Why isn't the SCVWD Board clearly aligned with Northern California and the SJ Mercury News editorials in regards to clearly opposing the Delta Tunnels?" The San Jose Mercury News has written several editorials opposing the Delta Tunnels. ("Delta Tunnel 'Water Fix' vote now? SCVWD should say No Way!" (9/10/17), "Stop the \$17 billion Delta Twin Tunnel" (9/10/17), "\$17 Billion Delta Tunnels Plan in trouble after key water agency backs out" by Paul Rogers (9-10-17), "State Auditor rips Jerry Brown's \$17 billion Delta Tunnels Project" by Paul Rogers for Bay Area News Group (10/5/17). Also, there have been many SF Chronicle editorials opposing the Delta Tunnels. This combined with the nearly 100 percent community support against the project at your August 28th meeting should clearly direct the Board to a 'NO' vote.
3. The State auditor's recent October 2017 report clearly showed the financial problems with the Delta Tunnels Project. This report found the Project was suffering from "significant cost increases and delays." Also, the state Department of Water Resources "has not completed either an economic or financial analysis to demonstrate the financial viability" of the project. Also, the Brown administration has not put in place a proper system of governance for the project, and has failed to keep important documents, the audit found. The audit further concluded that the state Department of Water Resources "did not follow state law" when it replaced a key program manager on the project with a company that it hired without a competitive bidding process and which was run by somebody without an engineering degree. In 2009, the Department of Water Resources announced the project would cost \$140 million to plan, design and permit. So far, it has cost twice that, \$280 million stated the audit's report. That cost has come from water districts around the state, and the federal Bureau of Reclamation.

4. Silicon Valley only takes a small percent share of the Delta's water exports. However, if the Delta Tunnels project is passed by the SCVWD Board, we would shoulder a heavy financial burden now and for our grandchildren and generations yet unborn. The Delta Tunnels project is not worth it especially considering its unknown final costs and the lower more controllable costs for local sustainable alternatives.
5. Recently the Westlands Water District Board, CA's largest and wealthiest water district located in Fresno and Kings County, voted to oppose the Delta Tunnels. Because of this vote if our SCVWD Board votes to support the Delta Tunnels we will have to pay an even larger amount for the \$16 billion (plus overruns) for the Delta Tunnels. "Absent Westlands, you don't have a (tunnels) project," said Jeff Kightlinger, general manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Absent their support our cost will be greater.
6. The Board should not support a project that will divert even more water from a healthy San Francisco Bay-Delta estuary to big, industrial agriculture known for record use of pesticides and chemicals that get into our food supply and waste water.
7. The Board should not support a project that will result in worsened water quality for the South Bay. Water quality in the South Bay is directly dependent on flushing action from fresh water from the Delta. The Delta contributes to healthier ground water, a source for much of SCVWD's water needs.
8. Minimally, delay the vote as was done in Los Angeles. On August 28, 2017 the Central Basin Water Agency and Los Angeles City Council Voted to Delay the Delta Tunnels Decision. There are too many cost unknowns to vote positively on Water Fix. "The Central Basin board recognizes that there are many crucial unanswered questions about who will pay for the Delta Tunnels. It would be a great injustice for low and middle-income communities in Los Angeles County to carry the burden for the tunnels, which will raise rates but not provide new water. We look forward to giving the board the data it needs to vote down this wrong-headed scheme. The Central Basin Board voted 5-2 to stall a decision on Delta Tunnels project citing the need for more information on local impact."
9. There are three issues which are important to consider before our SCVWD Board votes: cost increase state auditor's report, a lawsuit against the project and illegal handling of public money. Therefore, there are some shady issues which will take time and need to come to light before our SCVWD Board should vote on this issue.

With gratitude for your service to our community,

Kathryn Mathewson

Biologist for SCC IPM Program and Landscape Architect, SJ resident since 1950s

1698 Hanchett Avenue, San Jose CA 95128

kmathewson@secretgardens.com