



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 21-1219

Agenda Date: 11/9/2021

Item No.: *2.9.

BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT:

Delta Conveyance Project Update.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive presentations regarding the Delta Conveyance Project and discuss. This is an information-only item and no action is required.

SUMMARY:

Graham Bradner, Executive Director for the Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA), will introduce himself and discuss the DCA and Delta Conveyance Project (Project). Carrie Buckman, Environmental Program Manager for Delta Conveyance at the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), will also provide an update on the status of the Project planning process including permitting and environmental review.

Graham Bradner was appointed as Executive Director of the DCA in 2021. He has 20 years of experience in the evaluation, design, and construction of water supply infrastructure and retrofit of existing levees and dams in Northern California. Graham is a Professional Geologist in the State of California, and State-Certified Engineering Geologist and Hydrologist. Before joining the DCA, Graham managed the Sacramento Engineering Division for GEI Consultants, Inc. and served on the corporate Board of Directors. Graham joined DCA in 2019 as the lead for forebays and levees, studies, and program-wide evaluations as well as deputy to the Engineering Design Manager.

Carrie Buckman is responsible for environmental planning and permitting for the Delta Conveyance Project. Prior to working for DWR, Carrie was in the private sector for 21 years working on feasibility studies and environmental compliance for large water and restoration projects. She worked on planning efforts for Yolo Bypass fisheries restoration, the San Joaquin River Restoration Program, and Long-Term Water Transfers.

Background:

Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) has been engaged in planning efforts to improve the conveyance of State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project (CVP) supplies across the Delta since 2006, recognizing that the current approach of diverting directly from rivers in the vulnerable

southern end of the Delta presents challenges and limitations.

In September 2019, the Valley Water Board of Directors adopted eight guiding principles for participation in the Project and on November 17, 2020, the Board adopted a resolution to approve a provisional participation percentage in the Project of 2.73 percent and authorize the Chief Executive Officer to increase Valley Water's provisional participation percentage up to a total of 3.23 percent if additional shares become available. Additional shares became available, and Valley Water increased its provisional participation rate to 3.23 percent.

The proposed Project would construct and operate new conveyance facilities that would be operated as part of the existing SWP infrastructure. Specifically, two new points of diversion with intake facilities would be located in the northern Delta and a single tunnel to convey water from the new intakes to the existing SWP facilities in the southern Delta. It has the potential to improve Valley Water's water supply reliability while improving the flexibility of the State's infrastructure to respond to environmental conditions in the Delta to reduce fishery impacts. Over the long term, the Project could improve water supply reliability in the face of climate change effects, including salinity intrusion from levee failures and sea level rise; improve access to transfer supplies; improve water quality; and enhance the benefit of storage projects.

Currently, DWR is developing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has started preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Draft environmental documents are targeted for public review in mid-2022.

Additionally, DWR has undertaken public outreach efforts including conducting a series of webinars and workshops to provide technical information about the Project and environmental review process and to solicit community input on a potential Community Benefits Program. Four informational webinars for the public and interested stakeholders on topics related to the preparation of the Draft EIR were held. Topics included operations of the SWP, fisheries, climate change, and environmental justice. The last webinar in the series took place on September 16, 2021, and all are available to watch at <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/State-Water-Project/Delta-Conveyance/DCP-Informational-Webinars>. DWR and DCA have also been holding informational meetings with smaller groups within the Delta who may be more directly impacted by proposed Project facilities and construction activities and are making themselves available to speak to interested groups or individuals.

If the Project is approved, a Community Benefits Program would implement commitments to protecting and enhancing the cultural, recreational, natural resource and agricultural values of the Delta as part of the project. The Community Benefits Program workshops welcomed those that live, work, or recreate in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to give input on what objectives and projects within a Community Benefits Program would be beneficial to the Delta community. DWR held three workshops for the general public and two for tribal interests. The general public workshops are viewable at <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/State-Water-Project/Delta-Conveyance/Community-Benefits-Program>.

Next Steps:

In November 2020, the Board authorized the CEO to negotiate and execute a funding agreement with DWR committing up to \$4,034,001 for Project environmental planning and design costs incurred in Calendar Years 2021 and 2022, with an option to commit up to an additional \$6,972,348, upon future approval of the Board, for Project environmental planning and design costs incurred in Calendar Years 2023 and 2024. Staff anticipates bringing to the Board the funding decision for Calendar Years 2023 and 2024 in April of 2022.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with this item.

CEQA:

The recommended action does not constitute a project under CEQA because it does not have the potential for resulting in direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

ATTACHMENTS:

*Handout 2.9-A: PowerPoint

UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:

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