## SOLANO COUNTY GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR USE IN DELTA AND STATEWIDE WATER POLICY DEVELOPMENT

1. **Support Further Study & Analysis To Improve Delta Water Conveyance Proposals, Including Through Delta, Dual Conveyance And Isolated Facilities Options.**

   The Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force released its final report "Our Vision for the California Delta," which offers a vision for sustainable management of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta for 30 to 50 years into the future. Included in this report were three specific recommendations regarding "conveyance." They are:

   - A revitalized Delta ecosystem will require reduced diversions, or changes in patterns and timing of those diversions, upstream, within the Delta and exported from the Delta at critical times.
   - New facilities for conveyance and storage, and better linkage between the two, are needed to better manage California's water resources, the estuary and exports.
   - Major investments in the California Delta and the statewide water management system must be consistent with, and integrate specific policies in this vision. In particular, these strategic investments must strengthen selected levees, improve floodplain management and improve water circulation and quality.

   The Task Force also identified Near-Term Actions that must be taken in the very near future because threats to the Delta and Suisun Marsh are so serious. These focus on preparing for disasters in or around the Delta, protecting its ecosystem and water supply system from urban encroachment, and starting work soon on short-term improvements to both the ecosystem and the water supply system. One specific reference dealing with conveyance is:

   - Improvements in the current water conveyance and groundwater surface water storage systems should be pursued as rapidly as possible by the responsible agencies and departments, upon direction by the Governor.

   The Bay-Delta Conservation Planning process, Public Policy Institute of California, and the Governor have all recommended further study on some type of Delta water conveyance facility to meet the needs of south of Delta water users. In short, almost every research, public policy based organization and process is proposing further study and analysis of improvements to Delta water conveyance and in short, it is clear that future operations in the Delta will change. The only question is, in what form or fashion, and in what way will the future shape and operations of the Delta impact Solano County? Unfortunately, the answer is unknown at this time.

   Therefore, the County should support a position of further study in a show of good faith to the overall process. However, extreme vigilance is recommended with the goal of protecting County prerogatives, rights, and financial needs, impacts to its residents, future Delta governance, and legal options. It is important for the County to be willing to work with others and consider their needs, but the County **must** have

**Attachment B**

its needs met involving future delta activities, landscapes, and operations. Anything less is unacceptable.

2. **Defend County Prerogatives, Including Local Land Use Authority, Tax Revenues, Public Health And Safety, Environmental Protection, And Water Rights.**

Being vocal on priorities will show others interested in Delta policy that the County must be included when new policies and proposals are considered. Providing written follow-up, when appropriate, will document the County's position on critical issues. This will further the County's desire for a 'seat at the table" and continue to reflect an offensive posture. Five specific issues should be defended; land use authority, tax revenues, public health and safety, environmental protection, and water rights.

**Land Use Authority**

One of the greatest threats the County faces is losing its land use authority within the Delta region. Control over lands within the County's borders will help continue the primary function of local government – meeting the needs of its citizens and protecting their health and well being. Joining neighboring counties to protect this right should be paramount.

**Tax Revenues**

Many of the Delta processes and proposals focus on changing land use from private, agricultural-based usage to public, habitat-based usage. This will have a negative impact on County revenues in the short-term with unknown long-term revenue impacts. Concern over the future financial health of the County is not only warranted, but a powerful argument against those seeking to reshape the Delta because of the potentially negative impacts to services provided for County residents.

**Public Health and Safety**

Public safety is the primary responsibility of County government and could be placed at risk with increased public lands to monitor, reduced capacity of flood control projects (impeded drainage), degraded levee systems (or lack thereof), and increased salinity levels near domestic water supplies. The re-wilding of lands near urbanized centers will increase public health threats from expanding mosquito populations and increased costs to control the spread of these populations. It will be important to determine how the County will pay for increased law enforcement patrols, emergency response, and the control of elevated public health threats directly relate to the loss of revenue (associated with the re-wilding of lands as above).

**Environmental Protection**

The County remains very concerned with impacts on the Suisun Marsh and its natural habitat and wants to ensure that future action is consistent with the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act which covers marshlands, bays and sloughs in the waters surrounding the marsh. This means providing for adequate water quality, exercising sound water management practices including drainage within the Marsh, providing the production of valuable waterfowl plant foods and future supplemental fresh water supply.

**Water Rights**
The County is a water rights contractor with the State Water Project (SWP) though its relationship with the SCWA. The County also holds an option to access additional water supplies in the future and is within the Sacramento River Area-of-Origin watershed. Protection of the County's ability to secure and defend its right to water is essential for the future growth and prosperity. These rights should be well understood and vigorously defended by the County.

3. **Seek Financial Support Of Infrastructure Needs, Including Transportation Corridors, Levees/Flood Control, Storage, And Water Delivery Systems.**
Many of the processes and proposals envision a reshaping of the current Delta landscape and replacing with it with a more dynamic, resilient, and sustainable environment. If these processes prove financially detrimental to the County, it will be critical to quantity and recoup any loss. Infrastructure components play an important part in a new Delta by providing the necessary access and movement of goods throughout the area, while also protecting the remaining features from deadly flooding and salinity intrusion. It should be a Board priority to support the retention and improvement of remaining infrastructure components so vital to a properly functioning Delta, not only because of the benefits it provides to the County, but for statewide priorities (water transfers) these protect. Three areas of infrastructure improvements should be pursued; Transportation Corridors, Levees/Flood Control, and Water Delivery Systems.

**Transportation Corridors**
Roads, highways, and shipping channels are vital to the business climate throughout the County. Highway 12 is a prime example of a transportation corridor that supports commerce, emergency response, and circulation in the County, but also transects the Delta. Maintaining and improving these routes is vital and funding opportunities should be pursued.

**Levees/Flood Control**
Maintaining the capacity and functionality of flood control systems surrounding and protecting the residents of the County is necessary for the protection of life and property. The ability for the local communities and Reclamation Districts to maintain these structures is in direct correlation to the financial ability of having the tax base pay for the required work. This highlights the County's need to maintain a healthy revenue stream. Another impact to these facilities is endangered species issues that can limit and sometime prohibit the maintaining entity from performing needed work in a cost-effective way. Obtaining safe harbor provisions along with additional financial resources to ensure these facilities are maintained properly is critical to the overall protection of county residents, property and commerce.

**Water Delivery Systems**
Many in the county receive water from the SWP through the North Bay Aqueduct (NBA). Many in the water community see the area surrounding the NBA as prime habitat for restoration of threatened and endangered species that are in decline in the Delta, which is hampering the ability to move water through the State and Federal water systems. However, creating environments for threatened and endangered species to thrive so close to the main water supply source for the County will only increase operating difficulties in the near future. Therefore, alternatives need to be explored for receiving water from the SWP, with financial

resources provided by those bringing problems to the NBA, coupled with safe harbor provisions for continued NBA operations until a new facility is on-line.

4. **Identify And Seek Full Mitigation Of Negative Impacts To The County, Its Citizens Or Its Economic Well-Being.**
It is evident that significant impacts could be coming the County's way. These impacts come in the form of lost business income, lost tax revenues, increased compliance costs with endangered species laws, additional strain on local emergency services, changes to transportation routes, changing flood control operations, and a potential reduction in water supplies. The County needs to define, quantify, and seek reparations for these losses, with the goal of not incurring new costs already borne by the County and its residents. It will be critical to monitor and support legislation that would provide for mitigation to Solano County and its residents.

Adopting the five Guiding Principles will allow the County to be well placed to obtain lost resources and be held harmless with whatever proposals and processes emerge from future Delta discussions. Although the County may not receive all that is asked for, this body certainly has every right to demand concessions of those who seek to irreparably change the lives and livelihoods of Solano County's residents.

5. **Ensure the County is a voting member of any Delta governance structure.**
Taking an active and engaged position in multiple, strategically selected policy development arenas allows the County to "have a seat at the table" and take an offensive-minded posture instead of being placed in a defensive one. Three specific areas that should be pursued are Delta processes, State and Federal Legislatures, and the California water community.

**Delta Processes**
The County is becoming actively engaged in many Delta processes and proposals, through consultants, County staff, elected officials, and governmental entities the County has membership in (Delta Protection Commission [DPC], Solano County Water Agency [SCWA], Solano City County Coordinating Council [SCCCC]). Efforts should continue with meeting attendance, comments to programs and proposals, coordination amongst County consultants and staff, and discussion of County positions within the DPC, SCWA, and Solano CCCC. This will also allow the County to communicate and educate its residents on the current and future importance of these matters.

**State and Federal Legislatures**
Utilizing the County's lobbyists, seek meetings with State and Federal elected officials to explain the County's concerns regarding impacts from Delta processes and programs. This will allow for direct communication with decision-makers in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., which steer State and Federal agencies' future policies and regulations.

**California Water Community**
One-on-one meetings with individual water districts, especially the so-called "water export community," will show the County is serious in protecting its rights and citizens from adverse decisions regarding the future shape of the Delta, while also facilitating relationships with those who seek water from Northern California.

6. **Preserve legal standing for any and all proposals and programs that directly or indirectly impact the county, its citizens or its economic well-being.**
While still unclear, the County will need to preserve its legal standing in a few specific areas if it hopes to achieve success in current Delta discussions. These areas are water rights, area-of-origin claims, and salinity standards.

**Water Rights**
As stated previously, the County holds a contractual right to specific quantities of water from the SWP. Working with SCWA and other water right holders within its borders, the County should seek to perfect these rights and act diligently to maintain their specified quantities outlined in the contract, without reduction.

**Area-of-Origin**
Area-of-Origin is a concept of California's water law that in essence allows those of the area-of-origin to obtain additional water if their needs warrant at the expense of those downstream. The County is part of the Sacramento River watershed and has every right for additional supplies for future growth and prosperity, but may need to support others within the area-of-origin in their claims for additional supplies. While the area-of-origin concept has not truly been tested in the courts, it is only a matter of time before a suit is filed. There may also be a movement in the State Legislature to change the area-of-origin statute. The County would be well served to oppose any and all attempts to change the law.

**Salinity Standards**
High levels of salinity impacts drinking water, agricultural production and certain types of natural habitats, and has also been of great concern to county residents. State and Federal water operations are currently dictated by the amount of salinity within certain areas of the Delta. These standards are constantly being debated by various water interests (exporters, environmentalists, delta counties, etc.) but ultimately, the State Water Quality Control Board holds the power to dictate the accepted levels. Certain County water users also hold water rights that are based on various levels of salinity. As such, Solano County should seek to coordinate with County entities that are directly impacted by salinity and seek a unified position on appropriate salinity levels for County users.