

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

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December 28, 2015

Jessica Pearson
 Executive Officer
 Delta Stewardship Council
 980 Ninth Street, Suite 1500
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Pearson,

The Delta Protection Commission has been closely following the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Levee Investment Strategy (DLIS) project.

The Commission takes a keen interest in the outcome of the DLIS, as it will determine the revised Delta Plan priorities for Delta levees. Delta levee policy is critical to protecting and enhancing the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource and agricultural values of the Delta. As called for in statute, the Commission provides the following recommendations to the Council on methods to preserve the unique Delta values as the Council develops and implements the Delta Plan.

There is perhaps no more important Delta Plan action impacting the unique Delta values than Delta levee policy. Over the past summer and fall, the Delta Protection Advisory Committee developed a list of policy statements regarding Delta levee improvements which it presented to the Delta Protection Commission. At its meeting on November 19, the Delta Protection Commission approved these statements by unanimous vote, including the affirmative vote of all State agency representatives present at the meeting:

- 1) The unique Delta values (cultural, recreational, natural resource and agricultural) shall be considered for all levee funding decisions.** [Rationale: "Delta as Place" considerations should be elevated in the current DLIS principles, which are largely focused around levee improvements in densely-populated areas of the Delta. The law requires consideration of all of these statutorily listed Delta values.]

- 2) **Protecting levees is essential to protection of Delta roadways for emergency response.** [Rationale: Important Delta roadways (including many miles of State highway) are located on top of levees in the interior Delta. These roadways provide a critical function in emergency response (public safety and flood evacuation). Maintaining these routes for emergency response is an important reason to ensure funding for Delta levee improvements in the Primary Zone.]

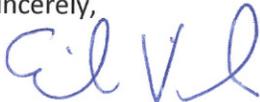
- 3) **The best available data and science for informing levee investments must be used or retrieved.** [Rationale: There has been concern over the data utilized for the DLIS; in some instances the data has either been older or outdated (such as capturing recent levee improvements) and in other instances it has undercounted residences and other built improvements on Delta islands.]

- 4) **Retain the Delta levee subventions program in its current form.** [Rationale: The Delta levee subvention program has been very successful at ensuring maintenance of Delta levees. Over time, with the successful completion of many projects, a plan seems to have emerged for bringing Delta levees up to standard. Ending or modifying this program in a way that would deprive rural levee maintaining agencies of funding would be a disservice to Delta as Place and the important values in the primary zone.]

During the Commission's discussion on this matter, several Commission members expressed their concern with the current draft of the Council's Delta Flood Management Investment Strategy Principles, and their hope that these officially adopted statements would lead to a revision of the Principles.

The Commission looks forward to continuing its discussion with the Council as it continues to develop an update of the Delta Levee Investment Strategy. I would welcome an opportunity to visit with you to discuss these statements in greater detail.

Sincerely,



Erik Vink
Executive Director

cc: Chair Randy Fiorini and members, Delta Stewardship Council
Chair Mary Piepho and members, Delta Protection Commission
Delta Protection Advisory Committee