DELTA CAUCUS

CONTRA COSTA - SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN - SOLANO - YOLO

Delta Caucus Position on the Bay Delta Conservation Planning Process

January 2013

The Delta Caucus seeks and supports the following in the development of a Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP):

- Fully inclusive, fair and meaningful participation in the development of the BDCP, including a decision making role in the process;
- A comprehensive Cost/Benefit analysis to be conducted on the proposed tunnels, and a range of improved through Delta conveyance alternatives;
- Improvements to existing levees to the PL 84-99 standard;
- Maintain and or improve delta water quality and the common pool for existing agricultural and municipal water users;
- A BDCP that preserves, protects and enhances the Delta's economy and agriculture. Any impacts both direct and indirect must be fully mitigated;
- Full protection of all existing Delta water rights;
- Implementation of storage projects as a component of BDCP, both upstream and downstream of the Delta.

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TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR DELTA AGRICULTURE

1. **To ensure a healthy Delta in which agriculture and its' communities thrive, movement of water must move through the Delta watershed considering the following points:**
    a. Export water must move through the Delta using existing improved channels (*ie. Delta Corridors*). As a result of an improved through Delta conveyance system, water quality and quantity are protected. Agriculture must have suitable water for irrigation.
    b. Only excess water in the Delta is to be exported.
    c. This can be accomplished by creating new water storage.
    d. Delta agricultural land supports a multi-billion dollar industry, benefiting the region, state of California and the world. At the same time it provides employment for many communities within the Delta. Without productive agriculture happening in the Delta, those communities will die and create high unemployment rates. Recreation alone cannot replace the lost economic benefit from agriculture. Any effort to mitigate these long term impacts must be done in a comprehensive manner that looks at the loss of multiplier effects throughout the region. This can be achieved by a cost benefit analysis. A fiscal feasibility analysis is not sufficient to weigh these opportunity costs.

2. **On-going agricultural activities must be unobstructed.**
    a. To enhance and protect agriculture in the Delta as stated under the Delta Reform Act, the Delta Plan must exempt Delta agriculture from covered action status *(Delta Plan, fifth draft).*
    b. Agriculture must have flexibility to change as conditions and markets readily change.
    c. As efforts to create new habitat develop, agriculture must be provided with comprehensive protections from the state and federal Endangered Species Acts in order to protect and maintain agricultural activities.
    d. Maintaining a Delta that provides flood control and drainage that allows agricultural activities to continue, is essential to the success for current and future cropping opportunities, including winegrapes, orchards and other permanent crops in the Delta. Projects that fallow once traditionally farmed land will have a negative impact to surrounding farmland as levees and maintenance of the water table will not occur.

3. **Ecosystem restoration efforts shall focus on limiting the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses with consideration to the following:**
    a. All habitat restoration projects proposed through activities of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, Delta Plan, and the Delta Conservancy shall occur on government owned land first.
    b. Acquisition of land must be obtained through conservation easements first before fee title is considered by the implementing entity.
    c. Any habitat restoration projects on privately owned land shall only be considered after all public owned lands used for habitat mitigation activities are exhausted. Private lands shall only be considered on a willing seller, willing buyer agreement with payment of fair and just compensation.
    d. Any conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses shall be mitigated for at a 3:1 ratio and the protected farmland acres must be within the statutory Delta as identified in the Delta Protection Act.
    e. Subsidence opportunities shall prioritize agricultural crops such as rice.

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DELTA CAUCUS VALUES STATEMENT

The purpose of Farm Bureau is to protect and promote the viability of agricultural production and operations. We, the five Delta county Farm Bureaus understand the need for water reliability and have supported the efforts of the Delta Vision, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP), and the Delta Stewardship Council's (DSC) Delta Plan for the purpose of addressing the future water needs of California. We are, however, very concerned with some of the elements of the BDCP and DSC's planning processes and are, therefore, joined together to ensure that Delta agriculture is not sacrificed to resolve current and future water shortages.

We encourage you to consider and we can only support solutions that incorporate elements, principles, and common values which:

1. Are strongly committed to the protection and enhancement of agriculture and associated businesses in the Sacramento/San Joaquin statutory primary and secondary zones of the Delta, nearby agriculturally connected regions, and that Delta agriculture be a primary value in all Delta planning processes.

2. Support the development of scientific and reliable information demonstrating the importance of Delta agriculture to the economic and social well being of the five Delta Counties, the region, and the state.

3. Understand and appreciate that Delta farmers are strongly committed to good husbandry and environmental stewardship and that Delta farmers are important factors in the maintenance of a resilient and robust Delta economy and environment.

4. Provide for the protection of Delta farmers' water rights, property rights, and existing water rights priority laws to include area of origin protections.

5. Creatively encourage voluntary landowner agreements such as easements, operational agreements, and incentives to provide opportunities for property owners to farm and provide other public benefits or simply provide public benefits where appropriate, and discourage public acquisition of Delta agricultural property in fee title.

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6. Are committed to flood control, including upstream storage and levee maintenance programs funded by all beneficiaries, recognizing that levees protect services, recreational opportunities, infrastructure of state, regional and local importance, and environmental values as well as land uses.

7. Support improved through-Delta conveyance of export water, to improve water quality through existing sloughs and channels, maintain the common pool concept, and protect Delta water quality for farmers, habitat, and export.

8. Require that Delta water be used first, for maintenance of current Delta salinity standards and maintenance of an adequate supply of good quality water for all Delta users to include environmental needs and second, for export of water surplus to local needs whenever it is available.

9. Provide for "regional self-sufficiency" for water supplies, exporting more Delta water in wet years and less in dry years, and sufficient additional storage upstream and downstream of the Delta to resolve current and future water shortages.

10. Require that planning processes by state and federal agencies be open, transparent and fair, and include local Delta stakeholder representation.

11. Recognize Delta counties' responsibilities related to the governance of the Delta region and provide for local government representation in any new governance structures for the Delta.

12. Include the 11 principles of mutual interest as resolved by the 5 Delta County Board of Supervisors (attached).

January 31, 2012

ATTACHMENT 1

RESOLUTION NO. _____

MULTI-COUNTY RESOLUTION ON WATER AND DELTA RELATED ISSUES

This Resolution is effective upon passage by the COUNTIES OF CONTRA COSTA, SACRAMENTO, SAN JOAQUIN, SOLANO AND YOLO, political subdivisions of the State of California (hereinafter collectively referred to as "the COUNTIES").

WHEREAS, the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta is at risk from many factors, and in addressing these threats the state may make large-scale changes to the Delta's legal boundaries and ecosystem, land use authority within the Delta, water conveyance through and around the Delta, water rights and water management statewide and many other aspects related to the Delta; and

WHEREAS, the COUNTIES of Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano and Yolo believe there is value in developing a coalition on issues concerning the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and greater Bay/Delta Estuary; and

WHEREAS, the COUNTIES wish to collectively articulate the issues and interests from the perspective of the Delta region itself, from the people who call the Delta home and perhaps best understand the tremendous resource the Delta represents;

WHEREAS, the COUNTIES have identified a need for joint action and advocacy in areas of mutual interest on Delta related issues; and

WHEREAS, the COUNTIES wish to educate and maintain positive working relationships with regional, state and federal governmental agencies and the public on Delta related issues; and

WHEREAS, through this Resolution, the COUNTIES have adopted a statement of basic principles describing their joint interests, which may be refined over time;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDERED the COUNTIES agree that:

The COUNTIES adopt this Resolution for the purpose of articulating mutual interests on Delta issues. The COUNTIES resolve to work together to better understand Delta related issues from a regional perspective and to use their unified voice to advocate on behalf of local government in available forums at the federal and state levels. Our mutual interests are as follows.

Management of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and greater Bay/Delta Estuary must:

1. Protect and improve water quality and water quantity in the Delta region and maintain appropriate Delta outflow for a healthy estuary;
2. Protect the existing water right priority system and legislative protections established for the Delta;
3. Respect and safeguard Delta Counties' responsibilities related to land use, water resources, flood management, tax revenues, public health and safety, economic development, agricultural stability, recreation, and environmental protection in any new Delta governance structures;

4. Represent and include local government in any new governance structures for the Delta;
5. Protect the economic viability of agriculture and the ongoing vitality of communities in the Delta;
6. Support rehabilitation, improvement and maintenance of levees throughout the Delta;
7. Support the Delta pool concept; in which the common resource provides quality freshwater supply to all delta users, requiring mutual responsibility to maintain, restore and protect the common resource;
8. Support immediate improvements to through-Delta conveyance;
9. Require that any water conveyance plan for the Delta be aligned with the principles established by this resolution and supported by clearly demonstrated improvement to the entire state's water management;
10. Protect and restore the Delta ecosystem, including adequate water supply and quality to support it in perpetuity; and
11. Include the study of storage options and implementation of conservation, recycling, re-use, and regional self sufficiency as part of a state-wide improved flood management and water supply system.

On a motion by Supervisor _____, seconded by Supervisor _____, the foregoing Resolution was passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sacramento this _____ day of _____, 2008, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES: Supervisors,

NOES: Supervisors,

ABSENT: Supervisors,

ABSTAIN: Supervisors,

_____
Chair of the Board of Supervisors
of Sacramento County, California

(SEAL)

ATTEST: _____
Clerk, Board of Supervisors