

***Bakersfield Californian***  
**Editorial: Governor Calls it Right**  
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Call it what you want -- a through-Delta facility, a conveyance, the Peripheral Canal -- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger called it right in Bakersfield last week, saying that it is long overdue.

The "it" is a means to get water that is transported from Northern California to Central and Southern California but without mingling it with the marshy waters of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The Delta is a 1,600-square-mile estuary fed by the joining of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, and open to San Francisco Bay on the west. Water flowing through it from the north feeds the California Aqueduct for shipment southward. An intricate set of levees impounds the Delta's marshy water to keep it from flooding.

For years, urban and agricultural interests have sought ways to increase the amount and quality of water they import for 23 million people and 5 million acres of farmland that depend on the water.

A ballot measure to build such a facility -- then called the Peripheral Canal -- was voted down in a bitter 1982 campaign that saw an unusual alliance of most environmentalists and the state's biggest grower -- Boswell-Salyer -- that was so divisive that politicians have shied away from bringing up the matter ever since.

Californians have paid the price ever since for that short-sighted campaign of rhetoric that mixed cynical self-aggrandizing political agendas, lack of foresight and almost no common sense, and that served no purpose except to confuse voters.

Every modern study of the situation shows that opponents' charges at the time were wrong: that Southern and Central California cities and growers would grab more water than they are due, and that it would ruin the Delta eco-system.

The most prestigious recent study by the Public Policy Institute of California affirms what most proponents have said all along:

- \* Segregating the transferred water from the salty water of the Delta will improve the quality of both.
- \* Less water would be lost to farmers and urban water districts, forestalling the need for importing more water.
- \* Removing the transported water from the Delta will reduce pressure on the dangerously weak and crumbling levee system.
- \* Segregating the water will prevent downstream habitat and environmental damage.

We urge Gov. Arnold "The Terminator" Schwarzenegger to not terminate his support for a water transfer mechanism that is so sensible but also so overdue.