

FACT SHEET

Addressing the Delta Crisis



California is facing unprecedented challenges this year. The reliability of our statewide water supply is in jeopardy and the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta (Delta), a critical estuary and our main water supply delivery system, is broken. These extraordinary challenges call for an extraordinary solution. We need a major overhaul that helps us better protect the Delta's ecosystem and creates a sustainable delivery system that gives us a safer, more reliable water supply.

Our Statewide Water Supply Has Been Slashed and Water Restrictions are Being Implemented...

- Federal court rulings and new regulations have called for massive reductions in our state's water supply — up to nearly one-third — from the State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project, the state's two largest water delivery systems, to protect certain fish species in the Delta.
- In total, more than 1.8 million acre-feet of water have been cut since 2007.
- California has experienced three years of severe drought and nine counties have declared a state of emergency.
- Because of ongoing dry conditions and reductions in water supplies, the SWP contractors were allocated only 40% of the water they were contracted to receive in 2009. Low allocations are anticipated for 2010.
- Public water agencies have greatly increased conservation efforts and have still been forced to tap into already low storage reserves, which means less water will be available in 2010. Residents, farms and businesses need to brace for even more water-use restrictions and rate hikes next year because of this year's conditions.

Our Water Delivery System, the Delta, is Vulnerable — a Katrina-Style Disaster is Too Real a Possibility...

- The aging Delta levees are at risk of a Katrina-like natural disaster.
- Scientists have warned there is a 66% chance of a catastrophic earthquake or massive flood event occurring within the next 50 years. Islands in the Delta would flood, the state's drinking water supply would be contaminated and drastic changes in the Delta's ecosystem would occur.
- Rising sea levels caused by climate change increase the risk of collapse every year. Already, sea levels at the Golden Gate Bridge have risen nearly 1/2 foot. Scientists predict that the sea level will rise another 1/2 foot to more than three feet during the next 100 years.
- If the levees fail, saltwater would rush in and disrupt the state's most important water supply. We can't afford to let this happen.

The State Water Contractors, 27 public water agencies throughout the state, collectively serve 25 million residents in California and more than 750,000 acres of agricultural lands with water from the State Water Project.

For more information, please visit www.swc.org or call (916) 447-7357.

www.swc.org



The Bay Delta Conservation Plan is a Comprehensive Solution that Protects Fish Species and Creates a Sustainable Water Delivery System...

- The Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) is a collaborative effort between water agencies, environmental organizations and state and federal agencies to map out a comprehensive, science-based, long-term conservation plan for the Delta.
- The BDCP will identify habitat restoration actions for the Delta and will address factors such as invasive species and toxic pollutants to improve the overall health of the Delta. The BDCP also proposes separating water exports from the Delta ecosystem to protect fish, while meeting the co-equal goal of ensuring reliable water deliveries for Californians.
- A new conveyance facility (either tunnel or canal) would divert some Sierra water from the Sacramento River north of the Delta and route it around the fragile Delta to the delivery facilities.
- Diverting water from a site higher upstream would provide a higher quality, safer water supply for millions of Californians. Also, it will reduce the risk of saltwater contamination of drinking water supplies now posed by earthquakes, levee failure and climate change-induced sea-level rise.
- Public water agencies have committed to paying for new conveyance facilities. Habitat restoration would be largely funded by the public. Californians will be voting on a bond measure in November 2010 that includes \$2.25 billion in funding for BDCP/Delta restoration efforts.

Governance Structure Ensures Appropriate Implementation of BDCP

- The California State Legislature recently passed a series of laws to improve the management and governance of the Delta.
- A new Delta Stewardship Council is responsible for developing a "Delta Plan" by 2012 to advance the co-equal goals of ecosystem restoration and water supply reliability. Additionally, the Delta Stewardship Council will ensure that BDCP complies with the strictest environmental standards in the nation in order to be eligible for state funding.
- A new Delta Conservancy will also be established out of the new legislation in order to implement BDCP's habitat restoration efforts.
- The State Water Resources Control Board will be required to ensure that adequate flows move through the Delta at the right times.

Environmental Review Process for BDCP is Underway

- The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the US Bureau of Reclamation are conducting an extensive environmental review of the BDCP.

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- The agencies will analyze the environmental impacts of the BDCP, the concerns voiced by members of the public and engineering options for habitat restoration and water conveyance.

A Broad Coalition Supports a Comprehensive Delta Fix

- Environmental groups, local government, public policy think tanks, business, agriculture, public water agencies, wildlife agencies, labor, Democrats and Republicans have joined with Governor Schwarzenegger and U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein in calling for Delta habitat restoration and improved conveyance.
- Collectively, we must work to move forward with a balanced solution that will protect the environment in and around the Delta, while also protecting the state's water supply that millions of people depend on.

How You Can Help...

Throughout the environmental review process for the BDCP, DWR will be hosting public informational workshops and public meetings. It's important that all stakeholders and constituencies participate in this process by attending these meetings and providing input to state and federal agencies and voicing support for the BDCP. For more information on the BDCP, please visit www.baydeltaconservationplan.org.