



Delta Counties Coalition

Contra Costa County · Sacramento County · San Joaquin County · Solano County · Yolo County

"Working together on water and Delta issues"

April 16, 2021

Honorable Anthony Portantino
Senate, State Capitol, Room 3086
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Eduardo Garcia
Assembly, State Capitol, Room 4140
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 45 (Portantino). Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2022

AB 1500 (Garcia). Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparation, Flood Protection, Extreme Heat Mitigation, and Workforce Development Bond Act of 2022

Dear Senator Portantino and Assemblymember Garcia,

Thank you for meeting with the Delta Counties Coalition (DCC) in March 2021. This legislative session, there continues to be a fruitful discussion around bond proposals to advance wildfire prevention, safe drinking water, drought preparation, and flood protection. Whether now or in a later session, the DCC respectfully requests your support to ensure important DCC priorities are reflected in the final version of any Bond. The DCC supports a Bond that provides funding for in Delta flood management projects and other direct assistance to local Delta communities to address the threats of flood, sea level rise and to maintain the existing through-delta conveyance system, while protecting the Delta ecosystem.

A bond must invest in maintaining and improving levees in the Delta. Because flood protection in the Delta is critical to both statewide and local interests, the DCC requests inclusion of a separate allocation of at least \$400 million for the Delta with direct allocations for levees and other measures for preservation, protection, rehabilitation, and improvement of existing levees to protect against of earthquakes and flooding, and to provide climate resiliency *in the Delta*. Delta levees have been significantly improved in the last three decades, and require continued investments to meet an acceptable minimum engineering standard (e.g., Bulletin 192-82 standards with a 24-foot wide crown to safeguard against earthquakes). In crafting the bond language, it should be recognized that:

- Preservation, protection, rehabilitation, and improvement of existing levees protects against the threat of earthquakes and sea level rise;
- Delta levee improvements provide multiple benefits, including protecting communities, agriculture, through-Delta conveyance corridors, and critical infrastructure of statewide and local importance (roads, railways, transmission lines, waterways); and
- Delta levee projects include ecosystem benefits at a programmatic level, so it is unnecessary to require ecosystem benefits on a project level. Due to the Delta's unique geography, it is

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often not possible to include ecosystem benefits in every project, and past bonds with project-level ecosystem benefit requirements have failed to fund important levee projects.

Any bond must also be neutral on the controversial proposed isolated Delta Conveyance Project. A Tunnel-neutral water bond would not include any funds for implementation of any aspect of the project, meaning:

- No direct or indirect funding for a tunnel or other isolated conveyance facility, including funding for meeting other tunnel permit conditions, and no funding for other mitigation requirements that could be relied upon by or facilitate the tunnel; and
- No funding for purchase of flows needed to operate proposed new north Delta intakes or otherwise meet state and federal water projects' compliance or mitigation requirements.

Bond funding may also include funding for:

- Delta habitat enhancements on Delta islands and in the Yolo Bypass already in public ownership;
- Restoration projects supported by local Delta communities that incorporate Good Neighbor policies;
- Payment of in lieu taxes when lands are taken out of private ownership for restoration purposes; and
- Projects that create more efficiency and utilize local and regional water supplies that result in reduced reliance on the Delta.

The DCC looks forward to working with your offices to develop a bond that meets the needs of the Delta and the entire state. Please feel free to contact us through our coordinator Elisia De Bord at 916-874-4227 or deborde@SacCounty.net.

Sincerely,



Patrick Kennedy
Supervisor, Sacramento County



Mitch Mashburn
Supervisor, Solano County



Karen Mitchoff
Supervisor, Contra Costa
County



Oscar Villegas
Supervisor, Yolo County



Chuck Winn
Supervisor, San Joaquin
County

cc: Governor Gavin Newsom
Jim Deboo, Executive Assistant to Governor Newsom
Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, Natural Resources Agency
Coauthors of SB 45 and AB 1500
Members and Staff, Senate Natural Resources Committee
Members and Staff, Assembly Water Parks and Wildlife Committee
Delta Counties State Legislative Delegation