

Delta Counties Coalition

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

"Working together on water and Delta issues"

May 12, 2021

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Alex Padilla
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: DCC Infrastructure Priorities

Dear Senator Feinstein and Senator Padilla:

The Delta Counties Coalition (DCC) writes with regard to the upcoming infrastructure investment package. As deliberations continue on the size, scope, and content of the legislation, we urge you to prioritize investments in flood control, water supply, and water quality improvements, all of which could help our state develop and implement a resilient water portfolio.

The DCC also urges you to ensure that any potential infrastructure bill includes language that would bar the use of federal funds to support the design, construction, operation, mitigation, or maintenance of Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta isolated conveyance facilities. As you know, the voters of the State of California have consistently made clear their opposition to such a conveyance and the use of public funds to support the construction of a Delta conveyance facility as long ago as the defeat of a ballot initiative to build the Peripheral Canal in 1982, through the Proposition 1 Water Bond of 2014, and as recently as Proposition 68 of 2018. In each instance, the voters overwhelmingly affirmed that the costs of any new Delta conveyance facilities are the responsibility of the water agencies that benefit from the design, construction, operation, mitigation, or maintenance of those facilities. This same limitation should apply to the use of any federal dollars to support water resources projects.

Instead of directing resources to a controversial project that would benefit one region of the state at the expense of the Delta – while at the same time doing nothing to address California's basic water supply challenges – we believe that federal assistance should be targeted to programs that could help California and other drought-stricken states secure resilient, long-term water supplies while preserving and enhancing natural resources and improving equity for future generations.

For example, the DCC supports robust investments in the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers' Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) programs and would support authorization of a similar opportunity through the Bureau of Reclamation (RIFIA). Investments in these programs offer access to long-term, low-cost federally backed financing to support and accelerate non-federal investments in critically important water supply, clean water, stormwater, water reuse, ecosystem restoration, and flood damage reduction projects.

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The DCC also believes that a greater federal financial commitment is needed to protect Delta levees, which are vital to safeguarding over \$60 billion of critical infrastructure, including pipelines, state highways, power and communication lines, and the state and federal water supply delivery system. In addition to statewide benefits, Delta levees safeguard the lives and livelihoods of millions of Delta residents and help support a vital Delta County agricultural industry that contributes more than \$4 billion to the state's economy each year, and boosts a Northern California mega-region economy with an \$875 billion annual gross regional product.

Finally, the DCC supports federal investments that help promote and enhance regional self-sufficiency, including funding for water reuse, ground and surface water storage projects, and the restoration and enhancement of existing conveyance facilities, which are foundational to the long-term economic health of our region and other regions around the State. Similarly, practices such as stormwater capture, water purification, desalination, reuse and recycling, conservation, groundwater cleanup, and conjunctive use are cost-effective methods for generating new sources of water and should be supported by robust federal investment.

Thank you for your consideration of our request

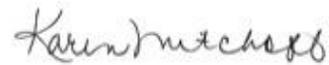
Sincerely,



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