

**Another Missed Drought Opportunity – One We Can't Afford to Lose**  
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The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (the largest estuary on the west coast, a unique national treasure with an economically booming agricultural industry that supplies food worldwide, and home to numerous protected aquatic and terrestrial species) is once again being threatened. This time, by another drought – one of the state's worst in history. The State must shift its focus from an outdated isolated Delta tunnel conveyance project to address a climate changing world.

The State faces an era with less water, unpredictable weather patterns, wildfires, and more, and a 20<sup>th</sup> century tunnel model cannot solve these 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges. The Delta Counties Coalition (DCC) has pleaded with federal and State administrators through countless meetings, public hearings, media, and through correspondence with policy makers to make water storage and other drought relief measures a priority during wetter periods. These requests fell on deaf ears, so here we are again – in another drought without enough stored water. The DCC asks again, "[Why the failure?](#)"

Over the past 12 years, the DCC has advocated for a diversified portfolio of water measures to avoid dire consequences from extreme weather conditions like drought and flooding, which are projected to be the new normal in California. To their credit, current State and federal legislative leaders are proposing drought relief packages that contains forward-looking initiatives, many of which align with the DCC's suggestions. But there is so much more that can be done.

Rather than focusing on a tunnel project that will not solve the statewide crisis of insufficient water supplies, the Administration should make more thoughtful investments to better serve all Californians, such as:

- Reinforce Delta levees to protect water supplies;
- Increase groundwater and surface storage capacity to capture more rainfall and snowmelt for use in dry years;
- Proactive water conservation measures to reduce statewide residential and commercial water usage by 15 percent per State guidelines; and
- Help local communities become more self-reliant through conservation, water reuse and recycling, and desalination.

If the same energy was devoted to these actions during the last drought, California could be in a much better position today with respect to water sustainability and reliability.

The tunnel project detracts from real water solutions that address climate-change realities of extreme drought and flood. These times demand sensible decision-making that maintains the health of our Delta. Californians must unify to get through these difficult times. That means building a unified statewide climate-resilient water infrastructure for current and future generations.

The DCC, once again, urges the State to learn from this crisis and realistically plan for the next.

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