



## Delta Counties Coalition

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

*"Working together on water and Delta issues"*

December 4, 2020

Members of the Board  
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California  
P.O. Box 54153  
Los Angeles, California  
90054-0153

**RE: Item 7-4 Bay-Delta Committee  
Delta Counties Coalition Urges No Funding for Planning Costs of  
Delta Conveyance Project**

Dear Members of the Board:

The Delta Counties Coalition (DCC) urges you to vote "no" on further funding for the controversial Delta Conveyance Project (Delta Tunnel), which is option #4 in your staff report. Only by stopping further funding of this misguided project can the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) and other water users make progress toward sustainable water solutions for our state.

The Delta Tunnel does not provide one drop of additional water, is not cost-effective and would divert billions of investment capital away from regional water projects which will offer local control, benefits and jobs. Inevitably, the Delta Tunnel would follow the same course as other megaprojects by being over budget and with a protracted completion date that will not improve your district's water supplies.

The Delta Tunnel, which the Department of Water Resources (DWR) says is at least four years away from planning and permitting, is no better than its failed predecessors (Peripheral Canal, Bay Delta Conservation Plan and California WaterFix), and continues to be controversial. Proponents argue the Delta Tunnel would help secure future State Water Project (SWP) deliveries threatened by climate change and earthquakes. The DCC disagrees with that argument, and even if it were true, the tunnel could not convey one drop of water for at least 20 years.

Our counties cannot accept a project that deprives the area of origin protections promised when the SWP was authorized because our areas also depend on reliable water supplies and a healthy environment. The Delta Tunnel would burden our infrastructure and communities with over a decade of unbearable construction, and ultimately increase water salinity, causing the Sacramento River to flow backwards at times.

The water rights change petition submitted by DWR in 2015 admitted that approximately 3,000 water rights in the Delta, including our municipal and industrial water supplies, would be potentially "injured" by the California WaterFix. The new Delta Tunnel would also wreak havoc on both the aquatic and terrestrial environment, further endangering fish and wildlife as well as the remarkable

December 4, 2020

Page 2

Delta recreational opportunities. These impacts would be devastating to the Delta and its residents.

There are viable alternatives to the Delta Tunnel and the DCC is willing to pursue them and at the same time support your water infrastructure projects that reduce reliance on the Delta. Maintenance and improvement of our levee system is vital to the communities and economy of the Delta, as well as to the SWP. Since state investments in levees began in the 1980s, an average of \$22 million per year invested has yielded a 50 percent reduction in levee failures. For a fraction of the cost of the Delta Tunnel, Delta levees can and must be maintained, and with proper support, state and local flood agencies can continue to protect communities and the SWP system against floods, earthquakes and sea level rise.

In addition, smart investments in existing SWP facilities would reduce impacts on fish and protect against sea level rise. There are also significant opportunities to reduce demand for Delta water exports through conservation and recycling, consistent with the 2009 legislative mandate to reduce reliance on the Delta for future water supplies. Emerging opportunities to treat brackish water more efficiently and other resilient adaptations to our changing environment are also available.

We urge that instead of throwing more funds into the Delta Tunnel, we work together to strengthen levees, repair existing infrastructure, protect Delta water quality, increase water availability statewide by several million acre/feet through various storage projects, recharging groundwater, and improving regional self-reliance across the state to strengthen California's water supply system. A vote for additional Delta Tunnel spending would expose your customers to significant rate and property tax increases without any certain returns. It would also disregard the environmental and economic impacts to the Delta, engender more conflict, and move the state farther away from effective solutions to meet California's future water needs. We ask that instead, your district join us in pursuing shared solutions that would both enhance the Delta and improve water supplies for your district. Please choose Option #4, no authorization of additional activities relating to controversial DCP at this time.

Sincerely,



Patrick Kennedy  
Supervisor, Sacramento  
County



Skip Thomson  
Supervisor, Solano  
County



Karen Mitchoff  
Supervisor, Contra  
Costa County



Oscar Villegas  
Supervisor, Yolo County



Chuck Winn  
Supervisor, San Joaquin  
County

cc: Wade Crowfoot, Natural Resources Secretary  
Karla Nemeth, Director, Department of Water Resources