

December 17, 2007

SWC

Served by the
State Water Project

STATE WATER CONTRACTORS
FOUNDED IN 1982

The Honorable Mike Chrisman
Chair
Delta Vision Committee
Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Activities to Support Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force
Recommendations

Dear Mr. Chrisman:

I am writing on behalf of the State Water Contractors (SWC) to urge you to clarify several issues in transmitting the Delta Vision report to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. The SWC consists of 27 local and regional public agencies formed under the laws of the State of California for the purpose of contracting for water from the SWP.¹ SWC's mission is to provide high quality, sustainable water supplies to 25 million people throughout the State and 750,000 acres of farmland. As highlighted by Judge Wanger's order on Friday, California's water system and our ability to convey water although the Delta face growing challenges, which are severely eroding the ability of our member agencies to provide reliable and safe water supplies. It is essential to get moving in 2008 on a new means of conveyance.

The Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force report makes some important progress toward identifying promising conveyance solutions. However, the SWC has concerns about two key issues, which we urge the Committee to consider and clarify as it makes its own recommendations to the Governor. First, statements that Delta ecosystem restoration needs are incompatible with the need to transport additional water through the Delta for California's economy are not supported by facts in the report and are inconsistent with the panel's own scientific guidance. Second, the Governance proposal is overly ambitious, duplicative and will be so controversial as to forestall needed progress on infrastructure.

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¹ State Water Contractors consist of the following public agencies: Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Zone 7, Alameda County Water District, Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency, Casitas Municipal Water District, Castaic Lake Water Agency, Central Coast Water Authority, City of Yuba City, Coachella Valley Water District, County of Kings, Crestline-Lake Arrowhead Water Agency, Desert Water Agency, Dudley Ridge Water District, Empire-West Side Irrigation District, Kern County Water Agency, Littlerock Creek Irrigation District, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Mojave Water Agency, Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Oak Flat Water District, Palmdale Water District, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, San Geronio Pass Water Agency, San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Solano County Water Agency and Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District.

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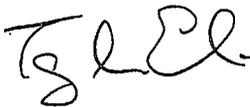
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While we support the Blue Ribbon Task Force's identification of the two co-equal objectives of provision of water supply and Delta ecosystem health, we do not agree with implications in the report that this objective can be accomplished only with reduced exports. Indeed, we are actively engaged in the development of the Bay Development Conservation Plan with the hope and expectation that major ecosystem restoration efforts, including a new conveyance configuration, will allow us to increase not only our reliability but our water supplies, at least in the wetter years. We urge the Commission to make clear in its recommendations to the Governor that it is premature now to declare that exports must be reduced.

We are also concerned that the governance recommendations in the Blue Ribbon Task Force report are too far-reaching. Tying authorization of needed infrastructure improvements to approval of this governance proposal, as the Blue Ribbon Task Force has suggested, would effectively doom these needed improvements. Instead, we need more strategic and tailored governance proposals that build on current regulatory structures. For example, it is possible that a new conservancy could be created to pursue ecosystem restoration projects, while land use oversight could be addressed by providing the Delta Protection Commission with additional regulatory teeth. We anticipate that many of the governance issues relating to development of a new conveyance system will be dealt with through implementing agreements emerging from the Bay Delta Conservation Plan. We urge the Committee to recommend avoidance of wholesale governance changes at this juncture.

We thank you for consideration of these views, and for your leadership and commitment at this key time in the State's water future.

Sincerely,



Terry L. Erlewine
General Manager

cc: Mr. Dale E. Bonner
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