



*John Kerlin distributed to Cabinet Council*

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November 11, 2008

The Honorable Mike Chrisman  
Secretary, California Resources Agency  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311  
Sacramento, CA 95814

## Re: Delta Vision and Bay Delta Conservation Plan

Dear Secretary Chrisman:

Over the past year, considerable planning has gone forward to address the various crises California is facing in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. In particular, the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force formed by Governor Schwarzenegger has taken public input, issued a series of drafts, and adopted a strategic plan. Also, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) has gone through the scoping process for an EIR/EIS to evaluate two specific alternatives: through-Delta conveyance improvements and new around-Delta conveyance facilities.

Both Delta Vision and the BDCP have as their co-equal goals sustainability of the Delta ecosystem and reliability of water supply. Both initiatives include some form of isolated conveyance to move water through or around the Delta. Our concern with these initiatives is that the water needs of those who live and work within the Delta will be of secondary importance to the perceived need for water supply reliability in other parts of the state.

The 2007 report of the Public Policy Institute of California, "Envisioning Futures for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta," listed nine possible alternatives for the Delta in three categories: maintaining the Delta as a freshwater body; allowing substantial water exports but with basic changes in water management; and substantially reducing or modifying the role of exports. This report also left open the possibility of hybrid solutions.

The League of Women Voters of California is concerned about the adequacy of the scope of review of alternative options for the Delta. The BDCP, in particular, appears to have moved very quickly and with minimal transparency and minimal involvement of Delta water interests to reach the EIR/EIS stage for one particular type of alternative. The League is not persuaded that all viable alternatives have been considered in these processes.

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We recognize that California cannot afford unnecessary delay in addressing urgent problems in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. However, it is the League's policy to promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources. The League also holds that decisions for land areas of more than local concern should be made at the lowest level of government feasible, but subject to state review, and that citizens must have meaningful participation in land use planning and regulation. Planning that moves too quickly to embrace some alternatives and reject others appears to violate the spirit of those policies. We urge that both the Delta Vision and BDCP include Delta water interests as part of the decision-making for any final proposal.

Additionally, we believe the state should set limits on the amount of water to be exported through or around the Delta. Therefore, we urge that the scope of the EIR/EIS include an alternative that would establish statewide water conservation, recycling, watershed management, development of local supplies, and other non-structural strategies as the preferred solution to meeting the goals of sustainability of the Delta ecosystem and reliability of water supply.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



Janis R. Hirohama  
President

Cc: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Lester A. Snow, Director, California Department of Water Resources  
Phil Isenberg, Chair, Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force