

Delta Vision

Public Outreach Workshop Summary

Workshop locations:

San Diego: August 18th, 2008

Los Angeles: August 19th, 2008

Oakland: August 20th, 2008

Chico: August 25th, 2008

Fresno: August 26th, 2008

Ryde: August 27th, 2008

Stockton: August 28th, 2008

Introduction

Between August 18th and August 28th, seven public workshops were held throughout California to discuss the third staff draft of the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force (Task Force) Strategic Plan (Plan). The workshops included an introduction to the Delta Vision process, an overview of the original 12 Task Force recommendations, an informational video on the Plan with interviews of a variety of affected Delta Vision stakeholders, a poster session, and a public comment period. The video and poster materials are available online at www.deltavision.ca.gov. The video is in the left navigation bar and the posters are in the Newsroom, also in the left navigation bar. Each workshop was hosted by a Delta Vision Task Force member or it's Executive Director:

- San Diego: Task Force Member Monica Florian
- Los Angeles: Task Force Chairman Philip Isenberg
- Oakland: Task Force Member Dr. Raymond Seed
- Chico: Delta Vision Executive Director John Kirlin
- Fresno: Mr. Kirlin
- Ryde: Mr. Kirlin
- Stockton: Task Force Member Richard Frank

The following document is a summary of the comments gathered at all seven workshops. Many comments were duplicated throughout the sessions and consolidated below wherever possible. Other comments may appear contradictory. The document is organized into the following twelve categories:

- Governance and Local Representation
- Water Rights
- Water Supply and Storage
- Conveyance
- Land Use Changes
- Data Needs/Specificity
- Recreation
- Levees
- Plan Focus and Format
- Ecosystem
- Finance
- Miscellaneous

If the Task Force or staff members responded to specific public comments, those responses are provided in italics under each comment.

The absence of a response does not infer that the comment is accurate.

Governance and Local Representation

1. Additional public outreach should be made to local elected officials in the Delta.
2. Public officials in the Delta should be added to the Delta Vision mailing list.
3. The Task Force and Delta Vision Committee should have more representation from Delta area agricultural interests.
 - *Mr. Kirlin responded that the Task Force has tried to engage landowners and the agricultural community throughout the process through the Stakeholder Coordination Group and other public meetings.*
4. The recommendation to use the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to create market structures for Delta agriculture to provide other benefits to the state besides food and fiber should be removed from the Plan.
5. The regulatory climate regarding all Delta businesses (agriculture, recreation, tourism, etc.) has become increasingly onerous over the last decade.
6. The focus of the Plan on state interests could come at the expense of local governments and damage local control.
7. A single state agency should be created to control water quality and allocations.
8. The California Delta Environment and Water (CDEW) Council proposal should be revised to become a board of local/regional officials.
9. A Delta governance structure/agency/council should be predominantly made up of local representatives.
10. The proposed CDEW Conservancy should be made up entirely of local interests, including farmers, fishers, and residents of the Delta.
11. If the SWRCB retains its powers as the adjudicator of water rights, it must be completely independent of all Delta planning processes.
12. The “special legal status” for the Delta mentioned in Strategy 11 is unwarranted. The Delta Protection Commission (DPC) already has the ability to preclude development within the Primary Zone.
13. The Metropolitan Water District (MWD) needs help to develop the political leadership necessary to start and sustain the actions in the Plan.
14. The governance strategies in the Plan must find a way to maintain federal and state autonomy.
15. MWD supports the governance principles of the Plan.
 - *Chairman Isenberg requested a letter stating that MWD approves of the governance recommendations in the Plan.*

16. The Plan must find a way to balance regulatory, judicial, and political decisions so that its actions do not automatically end up in litigation.
 - *Chairman Isenberg responded that the CDEW Council will help keep issues from getting tied up in litigation.*
17. Locating a new state agency in the Delta like the CDEW Council, (as opposed to Sacramento) will make land use and water planning more difficult for state agencies.
18. Implementation of any of the Plan's recommendations will require sustained political will at all levels of government.
 - *Dr. Seed responded that the intent of the governance plan was to be the polar opposite of CALFED. The Task Force is looking at a small group that will debate actively and openly to make the necessary decisions needed to achieve the goals of the Plan. Additionally, the Task Force is considering a recommendation that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) be divested of their operational responsibilities for the State Water Project. This removes their dual roles as both the operators and regulators of the pumps.*

Water Rights

1. Area of origin water rights for upstream and in-Delta users must be maintained.
2. The 1981 DWR/North Delta Water Agency (NDWA) contract and post-2021 water rights agreements should be included in the Plan.
3. The CDEW Council will not be a sufficient substitute for existing water rights adjudication.
4. "Public Trust Doctrine" should not be used as a vehicle to take over privately held water rights.
5. "Lower value" agricultural land in the southern part of the Central Valley should have more restrictive water rights than in-Delta agriculture.
6. Compensation must be provided to any upstream users whose water rights are affected as a result of the Plan.
7. Holding fee title for a parcel of land guarantees whatever water rights came with the land.

Water Supply and Storage

1. Using the example of the Colorado River, history shows us that exporting water from estuarine environment ultimately ruins that estuary.
2. The upstream water supply is being used as "mitigation" for Southern California diversions from the Delta.
3. Exports to Southern California are directly linked to Pelagic Organism Decline (POD).
4. The largest drop in available water diversions has occurred over the last seven years.

5. Additional upstream surface storage is an absolute necessity for the Delta and continued diversions to Southern California.
6. Desalination should be pursued as a water source for Southern California.
7. Too much water is currently exported via the CVP/SWP.
 - *Mr. Kirilin responded that the Plan acknowledges that water supplies must rely less on Delta exports. At the same time, some export of Delta water will continue.*
8. Too much water is used to irrigate export crops such as rice.
9. The legislation enacting the State Water Plan in 2002 requires that enough water be available for crops to ensure that “neither state nor nation become dependent on net importation of food.” Current water exports require that we import more food than we produce in California.
10. The Strategic call for 12,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) of outflow from the Sacramento River into the Delta cannot be met with current water supplies.
11. Upstream water contractors are generally concerned about the effect of the Strategic Plan on their water supplies.
12. The co-equal goals of a reliable water supply and a sustainable Delta ecosystem are incompatible.
13. Some estimates range as high as \$3,000 per acre foot of water being sent to Southern California. A better and cheaper supply could be developed by increasing desalination.
14. Removing water from the Delta for Southern California supplies increases saltwater intrusion, negatively affecting Delta farmers.
15. San Diego has lost 7,000 acre feet of water this year. The Strategic Plan should be implemented immediately to avoid further loss of supplies due to pumping restrictions in the Delta.
16. Wet year storage and recycling plans have been negatively impacted by the Wanger decision, requiring a new, high-quality Delta supply.
 - *Ms. Florian responded that one of the key principles coming out of Delta Vision is the need to maximize regional self-sufficiency regarding water supplies. At the same time, the interdependency between regional supplies and Delta supplies must be protected as much as possible.*
17. Subsidence, seismic threats, and sea level rise must be protected against to maintain any Delta diversions.
18. “Water supply” requires political leadership, while ecosystem concerns are protected by laws like the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
19. Reallocating water supplies for ecosystem concerns drives up the cost of upstream diversions and negatively impacts Northern California communities.

20. Local water supplies must be guaranteed for Northern California communities.
21. Northern California water is not the solution to Southern California water supply problems.
22. The likely reduction in annual snowpack due to climate change requires the construction of additional surface storage to capture rainfall throughout the year.

Conveyance

1. If a peripheral canal is built, the state should ensure that *at least* double the amount of water conveyed in a given year is held in storage at all times.
2. The proposed route for a peripheral canal should be clearly illustrated in maps by the Task Force.
 - *Mr. Kirlin commented that the Plan does not contain specific maps because not enough information is available to accurately depict where a canal may or may not go.*
3. Upstream communities should be included in the peripheral canal planning process.
4. The Strategic Plan improperly states that building a peripheral canal as part of a dual conveyance system is already a forgone conclusion.
5. The recommendations in the Plan are “window-dressing” to get local communities to accept a peripheral canal.
6. The SWP is the largest energy consumer in the state. An analysis of energy consumption should be included in the plans for an isolated conveyance facility.
7. The three goals of creating a sustainable Delta ecosystem, maintaining a reliable water supply, and building a peripheral canal are irreconcilable
8. A peripheral canal cannot be built on the periphery of the Delta anymore, as most of these lands have been developed. In those areas that *are* undeveloped, the construction of a canal would damage drainage, irrigation systems, county roads, and flood conveyance facilities.
9. The Delta Vision process has been co-opted by the Governor and Southern California water interests so that the end result can only be a peripheral canal.
10. A peripheral canal would unnecessarily displace Delta agriculture.
11. A peripheral canal will cause additional salt water intrusion into the Delta.
12. Building a canal is irresponsible without first fixing existing levees.
13. A pipeline would be more flexible, allow greater control of exports, and be cheaper to construct than a peripheral canal.

- *Chairman Isenberg responded that regardless of the conveyance structure, a backup system of some sort will still be needed. In the case of the “dual conveyance” model, a through-Delta conveyance system would also be constructed.*

14. A new conveyance system must be built to provide a reliable water supply.
15. To build a new conveyance system, the political will must be maintained in Sacramento to ensure a reliable water supply.
16. The idea of a peripheral canal is outdated. A canal requires new storage facilities, but California is running out of places where new dams could be built.

Land Use Changes

1. Increasing the amount of land dedicated to habitat restoration will decrease the amount of viable production agriculture in the Delta.
2. As lands transition into habitat restoration uses, local governments will lose tax revenue.
3. Any reference to taking agricultural land out of production should be removed from the Plan.
4. High-value agricultural land should not be taken out of production. Instead, lower value agricultural land further south in the Central Valley should be taken out of production or given more restrictive water rights.
5. Land use changes should be left up to local residents. The ecosystem and farming community are already well cared for.

Data/ Strategic Plan Specificity

1. The Plan does not contain enough specificity as to which lands will be affected by the recommendations.
2. The Plan should include a detailed analysis of the effect of the recommendations on recreation.
3. DWR circulated maps showing Clarksburg underwater. This idea and the Plan are both based on bad science. A more thorough scientific review of the recommendations is needed.
4. In the interest of transparency, additional data is needed on who water contracts are given out to, and how much money those contracts generate.
5. More information is needed on which levee repairs will receive public funding to protect “state interests.”
6. More specificity is needed on who will make up the CDEW Board and what the CDEW Plan will consist of.

- *Chairman Isenberg responded that staff has suggested that until the CDEW Plan is adopted, the recommendations in the Delta Vision Strategic Plan should serve as interim measures.*
7. The Plan will be unsuccessful unless more technical data on groundwater volumes, recharge, and discharge rates is developed.
 8. More data on conveyance finance and benefit assessment methods must be included in the Plan.
 9. The amount of water available for diversions to Southern California should be determined after the following questions are answered:
 - a. How much water is allocated for “prior” water rights holders?
 - b. How much water is needed to sustain the ecosystem?
 - c. How much water is needed to meet water quality goals?

Recreation

1. The Plan should include specific recommendations regarding recreation.
2. The Public Trust Doctrine protects the use and enjoyment of Delta for current and future generations.
3. Control structures, such as gates or barriers both temporary and permanent, should have alternatives identified to sustain recreational boat passage.
4. The Central Delta economy largely depends on businesses and the services provided to boaters.

Levees/Flood

1. The assumption that 30 levees will fail in the event of an earthquake in the Delta is incorrect.
2. The idea that levees in the Delta will collapse from seismic activity is based on inaccurate science.
3. There needs to be a strategy to address levee instability and sea level rise.
 - *Ms. Florian acknowledged the importance of sea level rise and explains that all the work the Task Force has done is using a basic assumption for sea level rise. Additionally, the Task Force has asked the governor to have the state decide on a sea level rise standard for all state agencies to use.*
4. No acres should be lost due to climate change/sea level rise; the levees should be raised to combat this regardless of the cost.
5. Linkages in the Plan between Hurricane Katrina and possible events in the Delta are unjustified.
6. It is not possible to provide a 200 year plan for flood protection in the Delta.

7. The non-structural protection of the floodplain in the South Delta was never discussed with the South Delta Water Agency.
8. Building levees in Sacramento will simply relocate, without eliminating, the flood problem.

Plan Focus and Format

1. Previously submitted organizational comments do not appear to be reflected in the third draft of the Plan.
2. In addition to water supply reliability and a sustainable ecosystem, there should be a third coequal value of "Delta as Place."
3. The Plan should have "redlined" versions in order to make revisions between drafts easier to identify.
4. The Task Force should consider the "water work done in the early 20th century."
5. The Plan's recommendation for 25,000 acres of tidal restoration in Suisun Marsh is overbroad and discounts 9 years of work on the Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement (SMPA) process.
6. The co-equal goals are not primary as they ignore the Delta's economy and value as a place.
7. Add a statement speaking to "a Vision of fairness, water supply, environmental equity, and of a State in which politics is not the determining factor in human need."
8. All near-term actions should be concentrated in a separate section of the Plan.
 - *Ms. Florian explained that near-term improvements are important to the Task Force. The members of the Task Force have been adamant that action be taken and are frustrated that none has thus far.*
9. More information should be provided to why Ironhouse Sanitation District is mentioned as a partner for restoration activities with DWR on Sherman, Twitchell, and Jersey Islands.
10. It is important to explore why the existing plans do not work well.
11. In terms of ecosystem restoration there are other plans such as BDCP moving forward which should be taken into consideration.

Ecosystem

1. More attention should be paid to the environmental concerns of the Delta, and less to conveyance and water supply options.
2. Water purveyor and customers must be willing to invest in the ecosystem that produces the water.

3. Measures should be taken to preserve the last robust population of inland Chinook salmon held in Butte Creek.
4. The Strategic Plan should not call for the protection of striped bass, but instead add them to the invasive species list as they prey on the native salmon population.
5. The size records for striped bass came out of the base of San Luis Reservoir over 30 years ago.
6. Nowhere in the section entitled “water reliability, supply and quality” does the Plan mention improving water quality for fish or other aquatic wildlife.
7. It is impossible to operate a peripheral canal and protect the Delta while continuing to export water.
8. To mitigate the export impact on the fish, pumping must be reduced to zero.
9. Within the last 50 years water in the San Joaquin River has become unconsumable.
10. No town should be able to dump raw sewerage straight into a river.
11. Healing the damage taken place in the Delta should be the first priority.
 - *Mr. Kirlin responded that the Task Force has and will continue to argue that controlling contaminants entering the Delta is vital for the ecosystem.*
12. Leadership is fundamental to the co-equal values, since ecosystem interests are protected by the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
13. Delta Vision must consider the natural Upper Sacramento River Valley watershed as a component of the Delta ecosystem.
14. Nature allowed salt water to move much higher in the Delta than the man made river system.

Finance

1. Finances should be used for practical things rather than another conveyance system.
2. To spend millions of dollars on a canal without allocating funds to reconstruct existing levees is wrong.
3. Water agencies have said that they will contribute financially to carry out the Plan’s recommendations and construct a new conveyance system.
4. Implementation of the Plan should not depend on bond measures.
 - *Ms. Florian clarified that funding will come from multiple sources including bonds. The Plan will establish a system where those who benefit will pay and there will not be subsidy for water use.*
5. State bond funding is the key in considering interim strategies.

6. Cost-sharing arrangements should be developed.
7. The Plan suggests a “per acre foot” fee and separate fee on water conveyed through or around the Delta. This is a threshold issue bypassed in that text.
8. Safeguards must exist to ensure funds are not used for purposes not enumerated at time of enactment, as well as measures to protect funding during fiscal emergencies.
9. The plan does not address how funding to construct a peripheral canal would be obtained.
10. Investments in agriculture, to fix levees, and to rebuild infrastructure such as roads and railways need to be explicitly included in the Plan.

Miscellaneous

1. The Delta should be recognized as its own unique region on every map produced by the State, and proposed routes for a peripheral canal should be included on these maps.
2. Will there be a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Report (EIS/R) for the Delta Vision and BDCP processes?
3. Uncertainties in water supply will hurt the wine grape growing industry’s ability to invest in new plants.
4. The Task Force needs to consider emergency response more fully.
5. Basic trust has been broken time and again by the way government agencies treat this resource and this region.
6. The Plan should address the inequity in water prices within the region.
7. The cheapest solution would be to put in a tidal buffer at the Golden Gate, or the San Raphael Richmond Bridge.
8. The Plan should include an energy nexus.
9. Strategies that require an intentional drop down of aquifers currently in balance will only move the negative impacts evident in the Delta further up stream.
10. Sacramento Valley water users are not responsible for the Delta’s problems.
11. The Delta is not THE water supply; 80% of California water comes from the Sacramento hydrologic region.
12. The Plan should reflect historical reality.
13. Citizens who take initiative to improve water use efficiency early are often are not rewarded.
14. The “unspoken goal of BDCP and other plans” is to depopulate the Delta.

15. The Delta is a unique and valued area much like all other places and regions in California.
16. The mismanagements of the past should be considered as the Plan moves forward.
17. Collaboration and the act of people backing and supporting the Plan will ensure success.
18. The Plan should not lose sight of the human aspect as it proposes billions of dollars of infrastructure.
19. Building a nuclear plant, desalinating water, expanding and building pipes for distribution could solve the southern Central Valley's water problems.
20. It takes the perfect drought to get opposing sides to come to the table
 - *Chairman Isenberg commented that politicians look for those types of physical conditions to promote change.*

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