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**Contact:** Kathryn Phillips, Director, Sierra Club California  
Cell: 916-893-8494

## **Water Resources Agency Tunnel Design and Construction Contract is Premature**

SACRAMENTO –The Department of Water Resources [announced](#) today that it is partnering with a joint powers authority to continue design and construction of proposed tunnels that would draw water away from the San Francisco Bay Delta.

The announcement comes before the environmental impact report on the proposed tunnels is final, and before critical permits have been allowed. Those needed permits include a change in diversion from the State Water Resources Control Board which would only come after a quasi-judicial proceeding that will begin this month and is not expected to conclude for many months.

Additionally, funding for the project is uncertain. It is expected to exceed \$15 billion, and water agencies that were expected to provide the funding have waived or asked that environmental law be suspended for tunnel operations before agreeing to pay.

### **Statement from Kathryn Phillips, Director of Sierra Club California:**

“Rushing into this kind of agreement costs the state money and employee time. It’s premature, given that the environmental impact review hasn’t been approved, and the tunnels project’s permitting hasn’t even really begun.

“Also, at this point, the agency is required to consider alternative approaches in its impact review. This latest announcement suggests that DWR isn’t taking that review seriously.

“Once again, the public interest, the public treasury and the environment are taking a back seat to DWR’s build-at-all-costs mentality.”

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*Sierra Club California is the legislative and regulatory advocacy arm of the 13 Sierra Club chapters in California, representing more than 380,000 members and supporters statewide.*