



December 9, 2013

Contact: Kathryn Phillips, Director, Sierra Club California
Cell: 916-893-8494; Desk: 916-557-1102

Sierra Club California Responds to Bay Delta Conservation Plan Release: Same Bad Proposal, No Real Solution

SACRAMENTO—The California Department of Water Resources has released the formal draft of the programmatic environmental impact report/environmental impact statement for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP).

As with earlier preliminary drafts, this formal draft calls for building two giant tunnels to draw water from the rivers above the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and move it south of the Delta, bypassing the environmentally sensitive estuary. The two tunnels are designed to carry 15,000 cfs of water, about the amount of water represented by the entire average summer flow of the Sacramento River measured near the Delta town of Clarksburg. That is, if fully utilized, the tunnels could become a bypass that will drain the Delta's own water supply to levels that will destroy habitat for salmon, birds and other wildlife.

Recent press reports indicate that planning costs for the tunnels have grown by more than \$1 billion. That, combined with funds already spent on planning, plus the costs of inflation, bring the costs of the tunnels' construction to more than \$20 billion. Water ratepayers would be expected to pay those costs.

Statement from Kathryn Phillips, director, Sierra Club California:

“Once more, Governor Brown’s administration has proposed essentially the same thing: giant tunnels and huge price tags that would create environmental destruction and not resolve the state’s water demand needs.

“We need a better plan for restoring the Delta environment and making sure Californians all over the state get the water they need. It’s time to focus on other strategies, such as, for example, improving efficiency, water conservation, metering and recycling options on a bigger scale than we’ve done in the state so far.

“It’s time to retire this boondoggle and the myth that tunnels will create new water. Faced with climate change and the growing uncertainties for all Californians about the availability of water, we need something better. Water districts supporting these tunnels will spend ratepayers’ money for something that won’t deliver the real water supply solutions Californians want, but that will destroy Delta habitat and fisheries.”

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.