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Sierra Club California Statement on Governor Brown's Delta Tunnel Proposal

SACRAMENTO—Today Governor Jerry Brown announced plans to build a massive twin tunnel system to carry water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to urban users in Southern California and agribusinesses on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley.

The two huge underground tunnels would carry Sacramento River water 37 miles to the federal and state pumps at Tracy. Key decisions on how much water will ultimately be diverted, how the system will be operated, and what actions will be taken to protect the region's endangered species will be delayed until after construction has begun.

Sierra Club California Senior Advocate Jim Metropulos released the following statement:

“It's disappointing in this day and age that we have to continue to discuss whether large, expensive tunnels with no environmental safeguards and many harmful impacts are the right solution for California's water troubles. We don't need 19th century solutions to today's problems.

“Governor Brown's Delta tunnel proposal raises more questions than answers about how to address the state's water problems. There are at least [seven common-sense questions](#)¹ that we've raised that must be answered before any ground is broken on such a massive, expensive and environmentally sensitive project.

“Californians need to know upfront how much water will be taken from the Delta by the massive tunnels, and how that will impact fish and wildlife and how any negative impacts will be mitigated or avoided. Right now, the science shows that some species, including the winter Chinook salmon, would be harmed by the construction of the tunnels. The project could make things worse for fish and wildlife than not doing anything at all.

“The Governor's proposal also fails to show how the state will comply with the legal requirements that California reduce its reliance on water from the Delta.

“California water agencies can increase water supplies in less expensive and faster ways by expanding water conservation, water recycling, and storm water recapture and by repairing and revamping older local water delivery systems.”

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Sierra Club California is the legislative and regulatory advocacy arm of the Sierra Club's 13 chapters and more than 170,000 members and activists in California.

¹ The questions can be found at:

http://www.sierraclubcalifornia.org/Water/Seven_Key_Questions_Delta_Conveyance.pdf