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White Paper Outlining Alternatives to Giant Bay Delta Tunnels Released

Conservation, Efficiency Measures Improve Local Control of Water Resources

SACRAMENTO—Employing technology and commonsense can create water savings that will help meet California’s water demand without building giant tunnels to divert water away from the San Francisco Bay Delta according to a white paper from Sierra Club California.

“Sierra Club California opposes the proposed tunnels,” the white paper states. “Instead, we believe Californians should pursue a range of strategies that together will sustainably meet water needs while protecting the environment.”

The white paper was prepared by Sierra Club California’s Water Committee, composed of active volunteers, many of whom have spent decades involved in water issues. Sierra Club California is a grassroots, volunteer-driven organization representing more than 380,000 Sierra Club members and supporters in California.

“California can meet its water demand sustainably and reliably by focusing investment in recycling, conservation, water efficiency and better groundwater management for both urban and agricultural users,” the paper states. “The list of alternatives in this document is not exhaustive, but it demonstrates that there are reasonable ways to meet California’s water demand without building the tunnels.”

Earlier this month, the state released the Bay Delta Conservation Plan’s Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement which proposes to build a 30-mile-long pair of giant tunnels to divert water from the Sacramento River above the Bay Delta. Federal agencies have noted that the plan leaves in doubt the fate of at least nine threatened or endangered species in the Bay Delta, including salmon and sandhill cranes.

“Our volunteers have become increasingly frustrated about the Brown Administration’s devotion to an outdated approach to California’s water supply challenges,” said Kathryn Phillips, director of Sierra Club California. “They decided they needed to lay out specific ways to meet water supply for everyone without relying on the tunnels. They didn’t have to dig deeply for many of the ideas listed in the paper. Some have already been suggested in other state government documents—which just goes to show that when it comes to water policy, good ideas that won’t compromise the environment haven’t been pursued by the state as vigorously as warranted.”

The white paper, entitled *Clean, Sustainable and Reliable Water Supply: Alternatives to the Giant Bay Delta Tunnels*, is available online at the Sierra Club California website:
<http://www.sierraclubcalifornia.org>.

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.