

Background:

The Delta Tunnel (aka The Delta Conveyance) project

The Delta Tunnel is an environmentally destructive, expensive, unreliable boondoggle of a project. It would essentially build a giant tunnel that would divert water from the river system that feeds into the San Francisco Bay Delta (located adjacent to Stockton) to send south to the San Joaquin Valley farmers and urban users in Southern California.

The Delta is the largest estuary on the west coast of North America and is critical for fish and wildlife and a linchpin in the state's salmon industry.

For more information about the proposed Delta tunnel, its impacts and its history, see the factsheets prepared by Sierra Club California staff and volunteers and posted on our [website page devoted to the Delta](#).

Talking Points

I am urging the board to vote AGAINST funding the next phase of Delta Conveyance planning.

The board should push the Department of Water Resources for a scenario that does NOT include a tunnel, but *does* include investment in local and regional projects that will result in less dependence on Bay-Delta water. Those projects would include improvements made to existing infrastructure around the state, and investments in local, sustainable water sourcing- like conservation, groundwater remediation and recharge through water recycling, stormwater capture, and brackish water desalination.

The Delta Tunnel project is estimated to cost \$16 billion, before inflation, and up to \$40 billion. Ratepayers will see higher water bills and property taxes with no guarantee of a sustainable water supply. The proposed expenditure request from the Department of Water Resources (DWR) is made at a time when the state is struggling with the pandemic and economic recession. It also comes at a time when climate change suggests that dependence on imported water is less viable and less sustainable than ever.

DWR claims that the single tunnel project will offer water supply reliability with the least amount of environmental damage possible. But in reality, the tunnel project offers NO reliability, incurs MASSIVE environmental damage, decimates Delta communities, and results in HIGHER water costs for southern Californians.

The Board should urge DWR to seriously analyze the "Commonsense" alternative that includes no construction of the tunnel and prioritizes investment in- and the use of- projects and technologies that reuse, recycle and conserve local and regional water supplies. Local and regional water supplies are the only supplies that are truly resilient to the uncertainties of climate change and seismic risks. These projects should include expanding stormwater capture,

cleaning up filthy groundwater, incentivizing water efficiency, and reducing the need of importing water from the Bay-Delta.

Californians value the protection and preservation of our unique natural resources. A “commonsense” alternative protects the Delta by reducing the need for Delta exports and allowing more water to flow through the ecosystem for the benefit of Delta salmon, smelt and other fish species as well as all the wildlife that depend on the ecosystem.

Construction of a Delta Tunnel will ensure decreased species populations and the Delta’s decline. It will also result in high expenditure with little benefit.

Californians value the state’s regional diversity and do not prioritize one region’s needs over the public health or quality of life of another. A “commonsense” alternative emphasizes local projects - projects that don’t depend on depleting another region’s natural resources and subjecting that region to poor air quality, bad water quality, and impaired quality of life.

If the single tunnel project is built, California can count on a rapid decline of water quality and economic health in the Stockton region, a stagnation of the San Francisco Bay, and a heavier ratepayer burden without improved water access in Southern California.