



Delta Counties Coalition

Contra Costa County · Sacramento County · San Joaquin County · Solano County · Yolo County
"Working together on water and Delta issues"

Delta Counties Assert that Single Delta Tunnel Project is No Better than Twin Tunnels Water Grab

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In response to the Notice of Preparation by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for review of a single tunnel through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, Don Nottoli, chair of the Delta Counties Coalition (DCC), made the following statement on behalf of the five jurisdictions that would be most negatively impacted including Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano and Yolo Counties:

"It's been 11 years since the introduction of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan Twin Tunnels proposal, and nearly a year since Governor Newsom's withdrawal of California WaterFix Twin Tunnels project. It appears DWR is pursuing another inadequate and scientifically flawed project with one tunnel.

For several years, the Delta Counties have participated in good faith with the Natural Resources Agency and DWR, sharing why they don't support an economically and environmentally costly Delta tunnel project, and suggesting ways to meet state water supply needs without harming the Delta. Today's announcement does not reflect an understanding of the Delta's core values or concerns. Clearly, a few meetings and a constrained stakeholder committee run by the tunnel construction joint powers authority are no substitute for real collaboration.

Unfortunately, in the last year, little has been done to address major problems in the Delta, including worsening water quality, crashing fish populations and inadequate maintenance of existing local, state and federal infrastructure needed for a vibrant economy. Alternatives to protect and enhance water supply reliability and better protect fisheries are available that would avoid the devastating impacts on Delta communities, economy and wildlife that would result from the current tunnel proposal. Yet the state has not meaningfully consulted with the Delta counties to develop these alternatives, instead focusing on only a tunnel to route water around the Delta. The State's claims regarding the probability of Delta levee breaches resulting from earthquakes fall short because comprehensive Delta-focused, peer-reviewed, scientific studies have not been completed.

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The health of the Delta – both its communities and the environment – depends on freshwater flows through the Delta from the Sacramento River. The Tunnel proposal would remove a significant amount of those freshwater flows from their natural course through the Delta. A single tunnel could still divert up to nearly half of the average flow of the Sacramento River and make conditions in the Delta worse, not better. Today’s announcement is a missed opportunity to get past the old conflict-ridden rivalries and pursue different and more fruitful approaches that would actually increase statewide water supplies. Instead, it’s more of the same divisive top-down approach pursued by past administrations.”

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