

BDCP Senate Hearing Speaking Points
Final Commentary Submitted for Testimony
May 14, 2013

Senators Pavley, Wolk and members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to provide some observations and genuine concerns about the BDCP planning process on behalf of Sacramento County and the Delta Counties Coalition (the 5 Delta Counties comprised of Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano and Yolo Counties).

I will try to focus my comments on a few touchstone issues, which are causing many of us in the Delta region a great amount of heartburn and apprehension.

The 2009 Delta Reform Act calls upon leaders at all levels to work to achieve the co-equal goals "of providing a more reliable water supply for California and to protect, restore and enhance the Delta ecosystem." The act also prescribes that the co-equal goals "shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resources and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place."

That some folks are portraying such a grim picture of the Delta...saying that if the floods and sea level rise don't get

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you...the earthquakes will...exploits our "implied" demise to benefit the advancement of the BDCP. This is not only objectionable but inaccurate.

We recognize that the Delta region is key to addressing the co-equal goals, but believe it is absolutely imperative for others to have a clear understanding of what's at stake for those who live, work and enjoy the Delta. To us, the Delta is a place of majesty and wonder, comprised of some of the most fertile soil in the world, set amongst a fragile and uniquely special ecosystem...an environmental treasure in need of care and nurturing...a place with a rich history and tremendous cultural diversity...a place where people make their homes, raise their families, and grow food and crops which help sustain a regional economy and contribute to our state, national and global economies...it is a popular recreational destination dependent upon a healthy and fresh water supply and on the 1100 miles of levees which protect it...it is a place worth saving and protecting **now** and **for** generations to come.

For these and many other reasons, the suggestion of building massive water conveyance facilities, ironically detailed in the

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BDCP as Conservation Measure #1, without the impacts being fully known and addressed is, in our view, unacceptable. Figuring out the details such as operational impacts, and how much water is really available to export, are not things to be figured out later. Neither is ignoring science... nor is leaving out those whose communities would be most affected. Finally, we strongly disagree with statements that the "Delta cannot be saved,"- whether in the context of BDCP or otherwise.

I would like to call your attention to an April 28, 2013, Sacramento Bee article which was distributed to the members and which vividly describes some of the BDCP impacts on local residents and farmers in the North Delta. The exhibit showing the overlay of facilities on this portion of the Delta give you some sense of the magnitude of the project impacts.

Imagine this...from Freeport to Walnut Grove, a beautiful and tranquil 10-mile stretch along the east side of the Sacramento River...but under the "preferred project" would become "ground zero" for accommodating...

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- Twin 40' tunnels, beginning at a proposed 1000 acre reservoir just south of Hood, running 35 miles to a forebay near Clifton Court in the South Delta
- Three giant pumping plants encompassing as much as 60 acres each, including six story structures, with the ability to pull up to a combined 9000 cubic feet per second of water from the river
- A landscape transformed from historic river towns, family farms, and an agricultural quilt of orchards, vineyards and row crops...to an "industrial complex" littered with 1600 acres of muck ponds, borrow pits and a web of power lines and realigned roadways.

And all this is proposed to be accomplished at a cost of billions of dollars over an estimated 9-10 years of never-ceasing construction activity, "24 hours a day, 7 days a week." When considering all the infrastructure needed to support this large-scale conveyance facility, as much as 18,000 acres in the Delta could be permanently removed from agricultural production.

But that's only the beginning, as part of the BDCP Habitat & Restoration Project, some 145,000 acres of additional land in

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the Delta Counties would be impacted, much of it prime farmland; up to 65,000 acres would be devoted to tidal habitat and thousands of other acres would be dedicated to other habitat types.

On the issue of governance and local participation, We want to express grave concerns regarding the project construction discussions between DWR and the water contractors, revealed in the April 22, 2013, Sacramento Bee article with the assertion of potentially "having positive outcomes." With all due respect, having the water contractors/exporters in charge of building this unwanted, massive project in our communities only adds insult to injury. Further, in proceeding without the involvement of the "very people who are at the center of the storm," while relegating local governments and Delta communities to the sidelines is disturbing to say the least.

I want to acknowledge that Dr. Meral and folks on the Federal side have met with DCC representatives and other northern California interests several times...however, and unless those representing the Delta in the room are part of the decision-making process, the meetings become somewhat meaningless.

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Having participated in a number of these meetings over the past three+ years, it unfortunately seems more like a "check the box" exercise than a meaningful engagement on substantive issues.

The DCC has long advocated for full, fair, and effective participation of Delta Counties in the BDCP development and implementation process, this includes decision-making roles and voting membership on the governance body developing and approving the BDCP...not just a token role as a member of an "advisory" Stakeholder Council as described in Chapter 7 of the BDCP draft.

The suggestion by BDCP proponents that building a massive water transfer facility, without the impacts being fully known and addressed, hoping to figure out the details later, is truly unacceptable.

Enforceable assurances and protections, such as those proposed in Senator Wolk's SB200 in 2011, would significantly help in addressing both the project related concerns and more overarching issues pertaining to water rights, costs and other BDCP associated impacts.

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We believe any proposed solution, BDCP or otherwise, must be comprehensive ...and...that the solution protect Delta communities, the local and regional economies, existing water rights and important habitat.

I want to echo Congresswoman Matsui's comments from the April 30, 2013, hearing before this committee when she stated... "Moving forward we have a real opportunity to get this right.

Unfortunately, the current plan falls significantly short." In my view, we owe it to the people of the Delta Region, and of California, and to the generations who will follow us, to get this right.

Finally, please make no mistake, the Delta is worth protecting and saving. That is what the BDCP should be about-meeting the co-equal goals and preserving and enhancing the Delta. The Delta Counties remain ready and willing to work with those who will take our concerns seriously and are prepared to work with others who want to "get this right", for all of California without sacrificing one region of the state for the benefit of another.

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Thank you again, Chair Pavley and Committee members for the time and courtesy you've extended to me this morning.