

BDCP COMMENTS

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I am Nick Di Croce, one of the facilitators of the Environmental Water Caucus. As you already know, most of the environmental organizations that make up the Caucus are opposed to the tunnels or any other peripheral conveyance intended to divert Sacramento River water under or around the Delta. We view BDCP as an “impending environmental and financial disaster, whose costs and unsettled financing are going to bury the tunnel-oriented project.” (Pun intended) Our organizations have questioned the Interior Department and the Resources Department on what the real costs of fixing the Delta are, who is really going to pay for the project. and where the water is going to come from. Our questions have not been answered.

There are three major factors that need to be a part of any major Delta project. They are: (1) A detailed analysis of how much water the Delta needs and how much water is really available for export from the Delta; (2) A valid cost benefit analysis to determine which projects should be undertaken, and; (3) A balancing of Public Trust values in order to protect the public’s heritage and the ecosystem services of its streams and estuaries. A recent workshop conducted by the State Water Board has shown that legitimate claims to water flowing into the Bay Delta exceed the available water supply

by more than five times in most years – that certainly begs the question of whether there is more water available for BDCP. The refusal of the BDCP project to perform a legitimate cost benefit analysis to this point is understandable; it will undoubtedly show the project is not to be able to pay for itself without inventing specious billions of dollars of guaranteed assurances. Similarly, not balancing the public trust values is also understandable; that will show that the economic value of the services provided to the state and the public by healthy, flowing rivers and estuaries far exceeds the value of water exports to a select few business enterprises south of the Delta.

In closing, we recommend to you that the BDCP discontinue its plan for tunnels or canals and adopt a more sustainable and less expensive plan, which has been presented to the Delta Stewardship Council by our Caucus. Instead of the 14 or more billion dollars worth of tunnels, which will be buried before we get a chance to know if BDCP can work, the Environmental Water Caucus plan includes a more aggressive water conservation and efficiency program to more than make up for reduced exports, the elimination of irrigation water for impaired farmlands in the San Joaquin Valley, the installation of improved fish screens in the South Delta, the continuation of the Biological Opinions' pumping restrictions which have been helpful to the fisheries, the reinforcement of key levees in the Delta, and a series of related actions that will improve the ecology of the Delta and provide a higher degree of water supply reliability for farmers and urbans.

Details of that plan are described at our web site, www.ewccalifornia.org and I will put copies of the Press Release summarizing these comments on the back table.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our viewpoints.