



Golden Gate Salmon Association Reacts to Peripheral Tunnels Release *Proposal threatens future of California Salmon*

San Francisco -- The State of California released a proposal today to build a huge water diversion project on the Sacramento River that could wipe out Central Valley salmon runs. The project calls for huge new water diversion facilities and twin delivery pipes big enough to convey the entire Sacramento River at most times of the year. The state is proposing to use these facilities to move Sacramento River water mostly to San Joaquin Valley growers.

The tunnel project is similar to the peripheral canal project voters rejected in 1982. In addition to harming salmon runs, the project is expected to cost homeowners, taxpayers and water users more than \$40 billion to build and finance. Additional hundreds of millions could be needed annually to buy water intended to mitigate for the environmental destruction caused by the project.

"Two giant pipes and diversions big enough to dry up the entire Sacramento River at most times of the year can't be good for salmon," GGSA executive director **John McManus**. "In addition, the state's own analysis shows the tunnel and diversions could literally cook young salmon by causing upstream river temperatures to rise to lethal levels."

Earlier versions of the project drew warnings from federal fishery officials that it couldn't qualify for permits needed to build it due to violations of laws protecting wildlife.

"The state committed itself a few years ago to rebuilding Central Valley salmon runs to 990,000 naturally spawning fish," said GGSA board member **Zeke Grader**. Grader is also the executive director of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Association, a group representing commercial salmon fishermen. "The gigantic, hugely expensive, peripheral tunnels project being proposed is an abandonment of this commitment. While some elected officials are bending over backwards to help a small group of corporate growers, they're ignoring the huge value salmon bring to the state."

Beverly Hills businessman and political broker **Stewart Resnick** would be among the major recipients of the water from the project due to his vast holdings in Kern County. He is famous for obtaining a major underground water storage facility from the state in the 1990's and then profiting from it by filling it with water during wet years and selling some of that water back to the state for a huge profit.

Peripheral tunnel proponents acknowledge the project is likely to damage the environment. Their answer: trust them to reduce water diversions when environmental damage occurs. But the history of California water projects is crystal clear on this point. With intense political pressure on water managers to deliver, water diversions are never reduced unless required by court order. By then, the damage is usually done.

Federal officials have repeatedly warned that the trickle of water left in the Sacramento River downstream of the proposed diversions won't be enough to sustain the delta, something today's proposal fails to resolve.

"Federal officials have to think long and hard about having their name associated with this proposal that will kill off salmon and likely the entire Delta," said **Victor Gonella**, founder and treasurer of GGSA.

"Diversion of too much Sacramento River water in the years 2000 to 2006 devastated the salmon fishery and forced the first closure of the ocean to salmon fishing in 2008 and 2009," continued Gonella. "The project proposed today would likely lead to the same or worse consequences to the salmon fishery."

Diverting salmon water from the Sacramento River to the San Joaquin Valley diverts salmon too, usually killing them. The tunnels being proposed are far too big to protect salmon, which tens of thousands of people depend on for a living.

Southern California water agencies have shown that they can reduce reliance on Delta water by investing in water recycling and water conservation. The tunnel plan ignores this and instead threatens Central Valley salmon runs.

Golden Gate Salmon Association (www.goldengatesalmonassociation.org) is a coalition of salmon advocates that includes commercial and recreational salmon fisherman, businesses, restaurants, environmentalists and communities that rely on salmon. GGSA's mission is to protect and restore California's largest salmon producing habitat comprised of the Central Valley river's that feed the Bay-Delta ecosystem and the communities that rely on salmon as a long-term, sustainable, commercial, recreational and cultural resource.

Currently, California's salmon industry is valued at \$1.4 billion in economic activity annually and about half that much in economic activity and jobs again in Oregon. The industry employs tens of thousands of people from Santa Barbara to northern Oregon. This is a huge economic bloc made up of commercial fishermen, recreational fishermen (fresh and salt water), fish processors, marinas, coastal communities, equipment manufacturers, the hotel and food industry, tribes, and the salmon fishing industry at large.

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