



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, April 7, 2014

Contact: Steve Hopcraft 916/457-5546; steve@hopcraft.com; Twitter: @shopcraft;
@MrSandHillCrane; Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla 209/479-2053 barbara@restorethedelta.org;
Twitter: @RestoretheDelta

**Restore the Delta, Experts:
Gov. Brown's Tunnels Force Byron Relocation;
Sen. Feinstein's Pumping Bill "Reckless"**

STOCKTON, CA - Restore the Delta (RTD), opponents of Gov. Brown's plan to build Peripheral Tunnels that would drain the Delta and doom salmon and other Pacific fisheries, today detailed the tunnels' permanent, significant and unavoidable negative impacts, including the forced relocation of hundreds of Contra Costa County residents. RTD also criticized Sen. Dianne Feinstein's "reckless" bill to ignore long-term good to pump water for mega-growers during a drought.

"The Brown Administration admits the tunnels would have '52 Significant and Unavoidable Adverse Impacts' on the Delta region, including permanently degraded groundwater quality, long-term reduction of navigation opportunities, and exposure to unhealthy air quality bad enough in Byron to require people to move in order to avoid an increased cancer risk," said RTD Executive Director Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla. "Hidden deep in the 40,000 page project proposal, and further buried in a [footnote \(p.31-13, AQ-13 and fn 6\)](#), is the news that Byron area children, elderly and people with conditions like asthma will be so threatened by air toxins from the tunnels project that they would have to leave town. What about the thousands of people just up the road in Brentwood and Discovery Bay?"

Bill Jennings, executive director of the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA), said, "California is in a water crisis because the state has over promised, wasted and inequitably distributed scarce water resources. Overpumping to serve Westlands and Kern County mega-growers has resulted in the collapse of a salmon fishery that feed families and a billion dollar fishing industry. Populations of Delta species like striped bass, Delta smelt, longfin smelt, American shad and splittail have declined by 90% to nearly 100% since the water project exports began. How

much more risk can our fisheries take before extinction?”

RTD Executive Director Barrigan-Parrilla criticized federal legislation to rollback pumping restrictions, “Sen. Feinstein is recklessly pushing more pumping for unsustainable mega-growers, while ignoring the heightened risk from continued dry years. This is exactly how we got into the current situation, when exporters continued to pump during the past dry years. The senator’s claim that fisheries aren’t threatened by increased pumping belies the facts.”

Jennings noted that “BDCP claims it will protect against a hypothetical earthquake that has never occurred in the Delta. There have been 10 large- scale multi- year droughts in the last 100 years, spanning 40 years. BDCP does nothing to protect against drought. BDCP proposes to spend over \$50 billion to protect us against something that has never occurred while ignoring disasters that regularly occur.”

Colin Bailey, Executive Director, Environmental Justice Coalition for Water, said, “Fair distribution of environmental benefits and burdens is central to the notion of environmental justice. The Bay Delta Conservation Plan does not provide safe, clean, affordable water to those communities that currently lack it, yet asks those communities to pay for it. Where is the justice in that? The benefits flow from the Delta to politically influential corporate interests, and the burdens are born by small farmers, businesses, and low-income communities of color. The impact of the BDCP and Twin Tunnels on Delta farming and Delta farmworkers, subsistence fishers and the commercial and sport fishing industry, and the cost of paying for it through taxes and water rates, will work an injustice against Delta and low-income communities, including in Southern California, all without doing a thing to help the plight of communities that currently lack reliable access to safe, clean, affordable drinking water.”

Osha Meserve, Local Agencies of the North Delta and a California farmland protection expert, said, “The BDCP would decimate at least 40,000 acres of sustainable farmland in the Delta. This number could rise to be twice as high again, depending on where experimental new fish habitat is placed. Delta farmers want to know why their farms will be sacrificed to irrigate permanent crops in toxic, selenium-laden lands in water districts like Westlands and Kern. Westlands mega-growers have continued to plant permanent water-intensive crops during the current drought. They planted 6,000 acres of almonds in 2013. We need to be more thoughtful in how we allocate our limited water resources.”