NEWS RELEASE

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River Group Blasts Delta Tunnels as a Plan to Dam More Rivers

Dozens Launch Campaign to promote better solutions

Sacramento, CA - Friends of the River (FOR) joined with dozens of other organizations at the Capitol today to officially launch the campaign to stop the Delta Tunnels as proposed. Instead of spending more than $25 billion on two massive tunnels to divert huge amounts of water through the San Francisco Bay-Delta, the river group is calling for decreased water exports from the estuary and increased investment in water recycling and efficiency.

"We're launching this campaign to stop this plan to build these massive tunnels that are part of a larger effort to dam dozens of rivers that we fought to protect over the last forty years, said Bob Center, Executive Director of Friends of the River (FOR). "With more than half of the water that used to flow into the San Francisco Bay-Delta already diverted, California deserves modern and sustainable water solutions instead of simply dusting off the Governor's plan from more than thirty years ago."

One looming issue is whether the 34,000-page environmental review of the plan even complies with state and federal law. The agencies were supposed to complete written Biological Assessments and Opinions addressing the impacts of taking huge quantities of fresh water away from endangered and threatened fish species *before* issuing the BDCP Draft Plan and EIR/EIS for public review.

"The public can't realistically comment on the plan because the key information isn't in there, said Bob Wright, FOR's Senior Legal Counsel. "This is an advocacy piece that is in direct violation of the Endangered Species Act and several other state and federal laws and we will challenge it as such."

Beyond concerns with the documents released today, just who will foot the bill for this multi-billion dollar project remains a mystery. State law requires a finance plan for the project but to date no plan has emerged.

FOR will fight for as long as it takes to protect California's waterways, wildlife and taxpayers from this devastating proposal to build the Twin Tunnels," said Wright.