

The Board of Supervisors

County Administration Building
651 Pine Street, Room 106
Martinez, California 94553-1293

John Gioia, 1st District
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Contra Costa County



David J. Twa
Clerk of the Board
and
County Administrator
(925) 335-1900

July 24, 2012

Dr. Gerald Meral
Deputy Secretary
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Contra Costa County's Position on the Bay Delta Conservation Plan

Dear Dr. Meral:

I look forward to our meeting, scheduled for August 9 at my Brentwood office, to discuss the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP).

In advance of our meeting, I am sending you the County's position on the BDCP as adopted by our Board of Supervisors on July 10, 2012. I am sending this to provide you with an understanding of our perspective in hopes this will help foster a productive conversation at our meeting.

I appreciate your continuing efforts to talk with the Delta counties about the BDCP process.

The attached policy demonstrates that we continue to have serious concerns about the proposed tunnel project. At the same time, Contra Costa County stands by our ongoing offer to work with the exporters and the state on a collaborative basis to develop solutions that work for everyone. We continue to believe that a more reliable water supply can be provided without destructive impacts to the Delta. Given a seat at the table, we are still ready and willing to assist.

Sincerely,

MARY NEJEDLY PIEPHO
Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Members, Board of Supervisors
D. Twa, County Administrator
Cathy Christian, Nielsen Merksamer
Paul Schlesinger, Alcalde & Fay
Delta Counties Coalition

See you on the 9th.

Contra Costa County's Request for Changes to the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan

Approved by the Board of Supervisors on July 10, 2012

The proposed 9,000-cubic-feet-per-second tunnel project

Contra Costa County does not support any particular project because not enough information has been developed to support any specific project. Enough information has been developed to reject the proposed tunnel project as described in the current Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). The preliminary environmental analysis has shown the tunnel will have significant negative impacts on protected fish species and water quality. Economic analysis also must be performed to determine the negative impacts that a tunnel project will have on Contra Costa County's Delta economy.

Changes needed for the BDCP effort to gain support from Contra Costa County

- The BDCP should discard all of the alternatives studied to date, including the new 9,000-cubic-foot-per-second (cfs) tunnel proposal.
- The BDCP should analyze a full range of lower-impact alternatives, including smaller tunnel projects of 3,000-cfs tunnel and 6,000-cfs tunnel, and several alternatives that do not divert Sacramento River under or around the Delta at all. These new alternatives would include a western intake alternative that would draw water from the western Delta rather than the Sacramento River, with constraints on the amount of water that can be taken and the timing for when the water can be taken; and other alternatives based on strategies such as water conservation, increased water storage facilities in the Central Valley and Southern California, and desalination. These latter alternatives would address the state policy of reducing reliance on Delta water (something the current BDCP does not address).
- The BDCP should adopt both of the state's "co-equal goals" as objectives to be achieved by the project, with neither goal being accomplished at the expense of the other.
- The chosen BDCP conveyance project should be operated by an independent entity not affiliated with the water contractors who will receive water from it. The independent entity should report monthly to the State Water Resources Control Board to ensure transparency in the operations of the new water facility.
- The BDCP should provide funds for Contra Costa County to: (1) conduct peer review studies to determine the adequacy of the BDCP environmental impact analysis; and (2) to determine water-quality standards in the western Delta to ensure a healthy water supply for Contra Costa County (approximately \$500,000).
- BDCP should provide funds for Contra Costa County to conduct an economic analysis to determine the impacts of BDCP alternatives on the County's Delta economy (approximately \$150,000).

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-July 10, 2012-
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- Contra Costa County must be given a “seat at the table” so we can work collaboratively with the water contractors and state and federal agencies to develop comprehensive solutions that work for everyone.
- BDCP must be consistent with locally developed Habitat Conservation Plans/National Communities Conservation Plans (HCP/NCCPs). If conflicts exist between locally developed HCP/NCCPs and the BDCP, the BDCP staff must work collaboratively with local HCP staffs to resolve the conflicts. BDCP must not interfere with local HCP/NCCPs’ ability to attain their habitat target goals.
- BDCP must be subject to the full extent of state and federal environmental review. Contra Costa County cannot support any streamlining or exemptions from either the California Environmental Quality Act or the National Environmental Protection Act.
- The BDCP must recognize the linkage between the Delta and the Bay, and recognize that any project that emerges from the BDCP could impact the entire Bay-Delta estuary, not just the immediate Delta area in which the project is located. The environmental analysis of the project(s) must examine for potential impacts throughout the entire estuary, including, but not limited to, impacts on flow from the Delta to the Bay, and water quality, species, and habitat impacts throughout the estuary.