



COUNTY OF PLACER
Community Development/Resource Agency

Michael J. Johnson, AICP
Agency Director

PLANNING
SERVICES DIVISION

Paul Thompson, Deputy Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Michael J. Johnson, AICP
Agency Director *MJ.*

DATE: October 22, 2013

SUBJECT: **BAY DELTA CONSERVATION PLAN PROPOSAL – COMMENT LETTERS**

ACTION REQUESTED

Authorize the Board Chair to sign two letters on behalf of the Board of Supervisors providing comments on the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) proposal to the Governor of California. The first letter is for a Sacramento region-wide letter and the second is a letter defining Placer County specific circumstances.

There is no net County cost associated with this action.

BACKGROUND

The California Department of Water Resources has recently released a draft version of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and several public water agencies propose to implement the BDCP, a comprehensive conservation strategy to advance the planning goal of restoring ecological functions of the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta (Delta), and improve water supply reliability for southern portions of the State of California. The BDCP proposes to build new water delivery infrastructure and operate the system to improve the ecological health of the Delta. The BDCP proposes to build two tunnels to allow a significant increase in flow of water from Folsom Reservoir (among other water sources) to bypass the normal flow through the Delta towards users in Southern California.

In November 2013, the Environment Impact Report (EIR) will be released. The current draft BDCP EIR provides analysis that during dry years (every 8 to 10 years historically) the impacts of the proposed BDCP and the twin tunnels will move the extra flow of water from our region into the Delta to cause a “dead pool” in Folsom Reservoir. The dead pool is created when dry year conditions allow an increased supply of the reservoir to be released in the Delta, thereby reducing water levels below the outflow pipe that delivers water to users in the region. Certain areas of Placer County could have no water for several months during those years. This situation would be devastating to areas in West Placer County, leaving hundreds of thousands of residents, business, agricultural land, and streams without water. The impact of this unacceptable consequence could be catastrophic during those dry years and into the future as the impacts would be debilitating. Staff recommends the Board provide two comment letters to the Governor of California; a regional coalition letter, and a letter from Placer County.

The region-wide letter asks the Governor to wait before proceeding with any part of the BDCP by reviewing the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) Statewide Water Action Plan (SWAP). In addition, it also asks to rewrite the BDCP with a more logical sequence of activities that would mitigate adverse community impacts prior to proceeding with construction of tunnels.

The County letter focuses on the specific effects that the current BDCP would have to Western Placer County areas: that of catastrophic reductions during dry years. Additionally, investments of millions of dollars in infrastructure and stewardship by Placer County and Placer County Water Agency, past, present and future, are addressed so that the Governor can understand that Placer County has, and will continue to invest into, not only the region's future, but also that of the State of California to keep safe, clean water flowing. The letter specifically asks that, given the unacceptable consequences of the current BDCP analysis, a new approach is needed which seeks to resolve the problems associated with water in the State before proceeding.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Region-wide letter of SWAP support

Attachment B: Draft Letter of opposition to the proposed Bay Delta Conservation Plan

cc: Holly Heinzen, Chief Assistant CEO

Gerald Carden, Chief County Counsel

October 18, 2013

Hon. Jerry Brown
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Statewide Water Action Plan – Region’s Support of ACWA's Proposal

Dear Governor Brown:

The undersigned water agencies, cities and counties would like to state their support of ACWA’s recommended Statewide Water Action Plan (SWAP). Our coalition supports ACWA's plan because it identifies a wide-ranging list of issues that must all be addressed if we are all to succeed.

As you know, the combined challenges of continuing population growth, rising sea level, and concern for endangered species, combined with fewer choices for the development of new water supplies have put California’s citizens, its economy and its environment in a precarious situation. The people of California need your leadership to develop a range of statewide water solutions that holistically addresses the tough choices for environmental regulation, new infrastructure and changes in the operation of the state’s water systems that will protect all Californians and successfully adapt to future conditions.

While we understand that the proposed tunnels in the draft Bay Delta Conservation Plan are likely necessary to ensure export water supply reliability, we feel that allowing the tunnel construction to move forward ahead of resolution of these other issues is fundamentally flawed.

Our recommendation is that the BDCP be re-written to provide a more logical sequence of activities. First, the state needs to address in-Delta issues including ecosystem restoration and creating a regulatory structure that will adapt to changes brought on by climate change and resulting sea-level rise. Then, based on understanding of what the medium to long-term regulatory landscape will look like, the California Department of Water Resources can create an operational plan for the proposed tunnels which will help to inform what the conveyance infrastructure should look like to create a more reliable water system for the entire state as well as benefit the Delta’s ecosystem.

In summary, we believe the actions included in the Statewide Water Action Plan need to be completed prior to the construction of the tunnels outlined in the BDCP. This will help create a BDCP that is much more effective in reaching its stated objectives.

ATTACHMENT A

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Our coalition represents nearly two million people within 30 minutes of the state capitol. These people need your leadership to ensure their water supply is reliable now and in the future. The SWAP is a good step in the right direction and we need to continue the dialogue.

With the concerns outlined above, our coalition in the Sacramento region wants to engage in thoughtful, constructive dialogue with your administration to develop a statewide water plan that is logically sequenced and that all stakeholders can stand behind. To that end, we appreciate your assistance in creating a venue to continue the dialogue with our region's stakeholder community. Please contact _____ who can assist your staff in setting up any meetings.

City of Auburn	City of Lincoln	City of Sacramento
City of Roseville	Placer County Water Agency	City of Folsom
City of Rancho Cordova	City of Elk Grove	City of Rocklin
Placer County	Sacramento County	El Dorado County
Sacramento Suburban Water District	Carmichael Water District	Regional Water Authority
San Juan Water District Wholesale	El Dorado Irrigation District	El Dorado County Water Agency
Citrus Heights Water District	Fair Oaks Water District	Orange Vale Water Company

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Rio Linda/Elverta Community
Water District

CC:

October 22, 2013

Hon. Jerry Brown
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: The proposed Bay Delta Conservation Plan

Dear Governor Brown:

This letter is submitted to you on behalf of the Placer County Board of Supervisors to convey extreme concern and opposition to the currently proposed Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). The consequences to populated and future growth areas of Placer County are not acceptable. Analysis has identified that implementation of the BDCP as currently proposed would lead to the periodic draining of the Folsom Reservoir below levels that provide fresh water to hundreds of thousands of our citizens and businesses for several months during dry years, predicted to occur on average, every 8 to 10 years.

Placer County extends from metropolitan Sacramento to Lake Tahoe. The County is positioned for significant growth with its proximity to the Sacramento urban center, with an expected increase in population by more than 150 percent over the next 50 years. The County and its partners have invested over \$100 million, with another \$60 million proposed, for critical infrastructure to provide a reliable water delivery system from the Middle Fork of the American River necessary to supply water and ensure environmental stewardship from a federally and state mandated relicensing agreement. Placer County's existing and long-term economic prosperity and development rely upon water resource stability. We have a strong agriculture base and sound conservation strategy for streams, preserving open space, rational community development, and a diverse economic base; all dependent on safe and sustainable water supplies. Without a predictable water supply, quality of life in Placer County will be severely compromised for citizens, businesses and visitors.

Before moving ahead with any portion of the BDCP, State leadership must resolve the associated issues of: (a) sea-level rise and the hydrologic effects in the Delta, (b) demands upon existing fresh water supplies and impacts to upstream communities, (c) concern for endangered species, and (d) the development of strategies leading to options for new water supplies.

A BDCP that benefits parts of the State at the expense of Northern Californians is unacceptable and is expected to result in disastrous consequences. Placer County is a signatory to a Sacramento region-wide letter that supports the Association of California Water Agencies' Statewide Water Action Plan (SWAP) and provides this clarifying letter regarding the instability that the proposed BDCP would create for Placer County specifically.

Placer County understands that the choices will not be easy and asks for your leadership to develop solutions that do not harm parts of this great State while helping others. California needs a plan that prudently balances community needs with local resources and develops sustainable water supplies for generations to come.

ATTACHMENT B

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September 25, 2013
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Thank you for your attention to this crucial matter. Our Board urges you to bring broader consensus to solving this dilemma in a manner that serves all of California.

Sincerely,

Jim Holmes, Chairman
Placer County Board of Supervisor

cc: Placer County Board of Supervisors
Placer County State Delegation
David Boesch, Placer County Executive Officer
Placer County Water Agency
Peterson Consulting

