



Delta Counties Coalition

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"Working together on water and Delta issues"

August 12, 2022

Mr. Wade Crowfoot
Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Via Email: Wade.Crowfoot@resources.ca.gov

**Re: Comment Period Extension Request
Delta Conveyance Project Draft EIR**

Dear Secretary Crowfoot,

The Delta Counties Coalition (DCC)¹ requests that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) extends the public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act for the Delta Conveyance Project (Delta Tunnel). Our counties are at ground zero for this massive infrastructure proposal, and we require additional time to meaningfully respond, as described below.

In January 2019, Governor Newsom announced the state would no longer pursue the California WaterFix, the last iteration of the state's isolated conveyance plan for the Delta. Three and a half years later, DWR released a Draft EIR for public review that analyzes the currently proposed Delta Tunnel project. The document includes over 3,000 pages of text and nearly 16,000 pages of appendices. In addition, numerous modeling results are associated with the analysis of environmental impacts in the Draft EIR. Understanding this modeling will be critical in assessing the project's impacts on fisheries, water quality, air quality and noise, among other impacts on our counties. We are still in the process of obtaining the modeling results necessary for our staff and experts' use in their technical review of the Draft EIR released on July 27, 2022.

The DCC and its member counties provided extensive legal and technical comments on the previous iterations of the project. Some of these comments may continue to be relevant to the current review process, while others are no longer relevant. To be efficient and accurate, in addition to reviewing the new materials released July 27, 2022, it will also be necessary to review and revisit prior comments and analyses to determine relevance to the current project. This process will inform which materials are most relevant and should be resubmitted and/or require updating of analyses to match the current proposal.

In addition to the Draft EIR, it is also anticipated that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will release a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) this year. Prepared pursuant to the National

¹ The DCC is an alliance comprised of the California Counties of Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo. These counties work collaboratively to give one voice on behalf of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and its four million area-wide residents.

Environmental Policy Act, the EIS will also require careful review by county staff and consultants to prepare meaningful comments.

Given these considerations, we request that the comment period be extended by 90 days to January 27, 2023. A total of a six-month review period is more appropriate given the scale and complexity of DWR's proposed Delta Tunnel project.

In summary, lengthening the public review period would have the following benefits:

- allow additional time to review voluminous documents and associated materials, thereby increasing the quality and organization of comments;
- allow for appropriate integration of prior comments into comments on the current documents;
- allow for coordination between the counties and others to reduce duplication of comments;
- help reduce the volume of comments submitted subsequent to the formal review process; and
- allow for review of both the CEQA and NEPA review documents, and preparation of comments that appropriately distinguish between these statutory mandates.

Thank you for considering this request. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Don Nottoli
Supervisor, Sacramento County



Mitch Mashburn
Supervisor, Solano County



Karen Mitchoff
Supervisor, Contra Costa County



Oscar Villegas
Supervisor, Yolo County



Chuck Winn
Supervisor, San Joaquin County

cc: Karla Nemeth, Director, Department of Water Resources
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