



## **Delta Counties Coalition**

Contra Costa County | Sacramento County | San Joaquin County | Solano County | Yolo County  
*"Working together on water and Delta issues."*

### **For Immediate Release**

May 14, 2025

**Contact:** Elisia DeBord

[deborde@sacounty.gov](mailto:deborde@sacounty.gov)

916-533-1872

### **Delta Counties Respond to Governor Newsom's May Revise That Would Fast Track Delta Tunnel Project**

Today, Supervisor Patrick Hume, Chair of the Delta Counties Coalition (DCC), which represents Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano and Yolo Counties, responded to Governor Newsom's May Revision budget proposal which would fast-track the environmental process to build a multi-billion-dollar, environmentally disastrous, divisive Delta Tunnel:

"On behalf of the DCC and the 4 million Californians who reside in the Delta, we are strongly against Governor Newsom's proposal: fast-tracking the Delta Conveyance Tunnel project through a trailer on his 2025 budget. This deeply flawed and fiscally irresponsible initiative risks becoming one of the most expensive and ecologically destructive infrastructure boondoggles in California history.

The project's estimated \$20 billion price tag has remained unchanged for three years, defying all logic, current tariff unpredictability, and historic precedent for large-scale state infrastructure efforts. California has an extensive track record of projects running significantly over budget, and even a modest estimate suggests the true cost of this tunnel could soar to \$80 billion or more. Yet, the Governor is asking Californians to sign a blank check—without cost caps or meaningful oversight, to benefit his corporate agri-business benefactors and a geographically limited constituency.

At a time when our state is reeling from the compounding crises of wildfire recovery, water insecurity, political instability, and a cost-of-living emergency, this project would shift the financial burden squarely onto ratepayers and water users—primarily in Southern California. These are families already struggling to make ends meet. They should not be expected to foot the bill for a project that fails to solve our water challenges and existentially threatens the largest freshwater estuary in the Western United States.

Even more alarming are the legislative and procedural shortcuts being proposed to advance the tunnel. Prior to this latest stunt, the proposed project faces significant deficiencies in an environmental review that only contemplated construction impacts, not operational impacts. By circumventing established environmental and legal safeguards, interfering with existing administrative processes, and reversing judicial determinations, the Administration's proposal would undermine transparency, accountability, and the rights of taxpayers and ratepayers across the state. The Administration knows that, subject to the

proper review and scrutiny, this ill-fated project would die of its own weight, just like the previous iteration did.

The State's tunnel project would seize thousands of acres of private land from working farms and landowners in the Delta, destroy vital ecosystems, and upend rural and disadvantaged communities that have stewarded this region for generations. Fast-tracking this project, rather than addressing its multiple legal, environmental, and financial shortcomings, is reckless and undemocratic.

California would be better off maintaining and improving levees to protect the freshwater pathway to the existing diversions in the south Delta, properly upgrading existing water conveyance infrastructure, developing sensible above and below ground water storage, and building additional water projects with widespread support to conserve and reuse water throughout the state. These types of projects could be delivered sooner, more affordably and with less devastation to an important ecological, recreational and agricultural resource.

We urge the Legislature to soundly reject this proposal. Californians deserve real water solutions that are equitable, sustainable, and economically sound, and not a risky and unaffordable project driven by special interests and outdated thinking."

###