



Date: January 16, 2020
To: Delta Stewardship Councilmembers
From: Jessica R. Pearson, Executive Officer
Subject: Council Priorities for 2020-2021

Chair
Susan Tatayon

Members
Frank C. Damrell, Jr.
Randy Fiorini
Michael Gatto
Maria Mehranian
Oscar Villegas
Ken Weinberg

Executive Officer
Jessica R. Pearson

I'm pleased to present, for your consideration, the proposed Council Priorities for 2020-2021 that will guide work planning for our agency. These priorities are drawn directly from conversations with you in 2019 and specifically the direction given by you at two special Council retreats in March and October. I am also excited to present the Council's 2019 Annual Report that provides an overview of the Council's accomplishments and progress over the past year. This progress, together with lessons learned from the five-year review, establishes the foundation upon which the Council's 2020-2021 priorities are built.

There was clear support for continuing major Council commitments; including our Delta Levees Investment Strategy work, providing statewide guidance on Delta ecosystem resilience and recovery through our Delta Plan Chapter 4 Ecosystem Amendment, implementing key aspects of the Delta Science Plan, and developing the first-ever Delta-specific Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Strategy to improve our ability, as well as the ability of local communities, to prepare for rapid change in this dynamic system.

All priorities listed in the table are budgeted for in the Council's annual budget, meaning the resulting work plan can likely be accomplished with existing resources. That said, future budgets are never a guarantee and therefore this work is contingent upon ongoing appropriations and staffing resources. Additionally, I'd recommend we stay alert for opportunities to assist with the implementation of the (now draft) Water Resilience Portfolio, and other administration-led initiatives that can help us advance the coequal goals.

All members this year also shared a keen interest in strengthening our communications and outreach. We heard your desire to make sure the way we talk about science is both understandable and highlights the relevance to management decisions. We heard that you want to highlight our agency's projects and programs to a variety of audiences, and to do so in new ways.

As a result, we are updating the Council's Communications Strategy to act as an overarching strategic document encompassing the goals and methods of the Council's outreach activities. It will include a message framework for councilmembers and staff to better describe our role,

"Coequal goals" means the two goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place."

– CA Water Code §85054

mission, and the work we do. Also included will be the efforts necessary to effectively communicate with the Council's audiences through strategic messaging, channels, and materials, followed by a discussion of measuring performance and engaging in meaningful partnerships.

Under this strategic umbrella, specific Council projects and programs will have their own targeted communications plans, derived from the Communications Strategy, that will drive the production of effective one-pagers, FAQs, press releases, blogs, and other communications tools for use by councilmembers and staff to reach specific audiences. Additionally, early this year we will present to you the results of the year-long effort to develop a Public Participation Plan, the first formal plan of this nature for our agency.

I also want to note that the Council's regulatory covered action role brings with it considerable uncertainty in terms of timing, expense, and workload. As covered action projects are proponent-driven, each is dependent on multiple variables that drive schedule and momentum. Therefore, we must remain flexible in order to provide high-quality early consultation services, appropriate to the scale and magnitude of the project. Appeals of covered actions can also add significant new work to our plate with little notice.

Thank you for your support, I look forward to our discussion on the 23rd.