



# Delta Conveyance Project

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# Status and Next Steps

- **CEQA:** Completion Expected End of 2023
- **NEPA:** Completion Expected Early 2024
- **California and Federal Endangered Species Acts**
- **Community Benefits Program**
- **Financial** (revised cost estimate and benefit-cost analysis)
- **Public Outreach and Engagement**



# CEQA Comments Summary

- 142-day comment period
- ~729 letters and other communications
- ~7,300 individual comments
  - 4,800 individual detailed
  - 2,500 individual general
- Covering a broad range of policy and environmental technical topics



# A Sampling of Popular Comment Themes

- Water quality (500)
- Project description and objectives (425)
- Fish (400)
- Range and scope of alternatives (350)
- Groundwater (300)
- Terrestrial and biological resources (250)
- Hydrologic modeling and climate change modeling (245)
- CEQA process and general approach (225)



# Comment Response Approach

- DWR will respond to all substantive comments
- Comment responses will be in two formats
  - Common responses and individual responses
- Clarify CEQA vs non-CEQA topics and process



# Examples of How DWR Will Approach Comment Response

- Range of alternatives
- CEQA and process
- Tribal
- Support/Opposition
- Modeling
- Operations
- Baseline vs future conditions
- Water quality



# Examples of How DWR Will Approach Comment Response

## Range of Alternatives

- Some commenters propose alternatives that address a variety of other statewide water supply issues
- Comment response will seek to clarify that:
  - Alternatives must satisfy the project objectives
  - Alternatives must also avoid or reduce potential significant environmental effects



# Examples of How DWR Will Approach Comment Response

## CEQA and Process

- Some commenters misunderstand CEQA requirements
- Comment response will seek to improve understanding of what CEQA requires.
  - Lead Agency's discretion, based on substantial evidence, to select analyses, evaluate findings, draw conclusions



# Examples of How DWR Will Approach Comment Response

## Tribal

- Some commenters view the concept of the Delta Tribal Cultural Landscape as specific sites rather than a landscape that encompasses many character defining features throughout the Delta
- Comment response will seek to improve understanding:
  - Approach to identifying and avoiding known character defining features
  - Approach to mitigation / limitations of mitigation inherent in Tribal Cultural Landscapes



# Examples of How DWR Will Approach Comment Response

## Support and Opposition

- Some commenters offer support or opposition to the merits of the project
- Comment response will seek to raise awareness about the purpose and requirements of CEQA



# Examples of How DWR Will Approach Comment Response

## Modeling

- Some commenters expressed concern that CalSim 3 does not adequately simulate operations of the SWP
- Comment response will explain why CalSim 3 is the best available tool for CEQA
  - Operations are modeled as intended
  - Drought conditions are representative of potential effects of the Delta Conveyance Project



# Examples of How DWR Will Approach Comment Response

## Baseline vs Future Conditions

- Some commenters expressed confusion about whether baseline hydrologic modeling used for comparison purposes was the existing conditions (2020) or future No Action Alternative (2040)
- Comment response will explain CEQA requirements
  - Proposed project and action alternatives compared to existing conditions (both under 2020 conditions)
  - No Project Alternative (2040) compared to existing conditions (2020)
- While not required by CEQA, the EIR includes appendices with analyses under 2040 conditions and a qualitative analysis of 2070 conditions
- The EIR also includes an appendix with climate change sensitivity studies in 2040



# Examples of How DWR Will Approach Comment Response

## Water Quality

- Some commenters expressed concerns about water quality in the Delta, particularly related to cyanobacteria harmful algal blooms
- Comment response will seek to raise awareness of CEQA requirements to identify impacts compared to a baseline



# Conceptual Operations Update

- If the Delta Conveyance Project were operational this year, it would have been able to capture about 228,000 acre-feet of water from January 1-31, 2023
- The project would not have been used in February while the Temporary Urgency Change Order was in place.
- In March and beyond, as conditions stayed wet and as storage filled, demands would have been met South of Delta, and there would not have been a need for the project to be operated.

## MISSED OPPORTUNITY

If the DCP was operational during the high rain events in January, we could have moved

**228,000 acre-feet of water**  
into the San Luis Reservoir

**228,000 acre-feet of water** = enough water to supply:



or



The theoretical DCP diversion of 228,000 acre-feet is about

**40%** of the total volume exported by the SWP in water year 2022.



Questions?