

Preliminary Staff Draft NOT APPROVED by Council

**Draft Principles for Water Conveyance in the Delta, Storage Systems
and for the Operation of Both**

Improvement of Water Conveyance, Storage, and the Operations of Both is Needed Now. As the Legislature found in adopting the Delta Reform Act, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta watershed and California's water infrastructure are in crisis and existing Delta policies are not sustainable. The current drought illustrates this crisis. After decades of study, decisions on storage, conveyance, and the operation of both need to be made promptly to further the coequal goals.

Delta Conveyance Principles

1. New Delta conveyance infrastructure and improvements should increase operational flexibility to provide more reliable water supplies.
2. New Delta conveyance infrastructure and improvements should minimize reverse flows and entrainment of fish.
3. New Delta conveyance infrastructure and improvements should increase resiliency of the State's water supply system against future threats from climate change and levee failures due to sea level rise, earthquakes, and flood events.

Water Storage System Principles

1. New or expanded water storage projects are necessary above and below the Delta to enhance the ability to divert and store water during wet periods and improve system flexibility to meet the coequal goals.
2. New or expanded water storage projects above the Delta should provide multiple benefits including flows for enhancing the Delta ecosystem by better managing water quality, flows, or water temperature - especially during dry years - or by increasing the reliability of water supplies for wildlife refuges.
3. New or expanded water storage projects below the Delta should provide multiple benefits including greater water supply resiliency during dry periods.
4. New or expanded water storage projects should support a comprehensive approach to managing the water cycle, including conjunctive management of groundwater, surface storage, floodplains, and wetlands for enhancing groundwater recharge and improvements in regional water self-sufficiency.

Delta Water System Operational Principles

1. Storage and conveyance should be operated to provide more natural, functional flows into and through the Delta by diverting water in wet periods and reducing diversions in dry periods, consistent with the needs of the Delta ecosystem and other water users.
2. Surface and groundwater storage, whenever feasible, should be operated conjunctively to reduce long term groundwater basin overdraft and improve groundwater basin recharge.
3. Operation of storage and Delta conveyance facilities should be informed by best available science, adequately monitored and evaluated, and adaptively managed to ensure progress towards well-defined performance measures.
4. Better integration of monitoring and modeling into decision making will require a long term commitment to funding, making information and data collected available more quickly to inform and help explain operational decisions and the effects of these operational decisions on deliveries and environmental resources.
5. Water storage operational guidelines should ensure adequate carryover of stored water at the end of each water year in case the following years are dry.
6. System operations should include more accurate, timely, and transparent water accounting and budgeting.
7. To ensure the durability of storage and conveyance projects' benefits, ecosystem benefits should be assured through contracts, regulatory action, or other enforceable agreements comparable to those provided to water users.