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Sent via email to Kelly-souza@deltacouncil.ca.gov

Subject: Regional San's Comments on the DISB Adaptive Management in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Draft Report

Dear Members of the Delta Independent Science Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft Adaptive Management in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Report.

We appreciate the report's thorough analysis of the stages of adaptive management, and the clear explanations of the practical pitfalls that may await at each step along the way. We also appreciate the transparency provided by the inclusion of the questionnaire and aggregated responses in Appendix D (p. 45).

We liked the approach of surveying and interviewing current Delta managers to obtain their perspectives on the implementation of adaptive management in the Delta (p. 44). We think that the study could have benefited from the consultation of a broader spectrum of agencies, beyond the state and federal levels, potentially including more of the "regulated entities".

Under Step 1, Define/redefine the problem (p. 17) it would be helpful to clarify the difference between the problem (e.g., Delta smelt numbers are very low), really an issue on which most people may be able to agree, compared with the potential causes of the problem (e.g., the factors or mechanisms that are causing Delta smelt numbers to be very low), on which there may be great disagreement.

The Adaptive Management Team (AMT, p. 36) is an interesting concept, and we think that it would benefit for a more detailed explanation of how the AMT would interact with various adaptive management efforts, how it would be funded, and how it would influence management without a clear legal or regulatory driver to mandate agencies to follow AMT recommendations. On page 40, step #1 would provide an opportunity to begin to determine the authority of the AMT.

When describing the role of the AMT in supporting agencies in using adaptive governance (p. 37, second bullet), it would be helpful to make clear that the compliance advice from the AMT will be only for covered actions, and will not apply to other regulatory programs operating in the Delta.

Unplanned experiments (p. 38, #3) do provide opportunities for adaptive management. We would argue that regulated permit changes may also provide an opportunity, as the outcome of changes in NPDES permits may involve uncertainty regarding their ultimate impacts, particularly under the influence of climate change. Regarding the pre-prepared monitoring protocols that are mentioned in this section, the work groups planning the Delta Regional Monitoring Program (RMP) found that that each constituent (e.g., pathogens, pesticides, mercury) requires its own sampling design and protocols. That said, support for a strong Delta RMP will increase the likelihood that relevant baseline data will be available should the opportunity arise for an unplanned experiment.

In the section on adaptive management and legislation (p. 39, #6) it would be helpful to clarify the relative timeframes involved in interpreting regulations differently (relatively quick, potentially less than two years) and in revising regulations (a long process that will take years, barring an emergency).

While the Doremus sidebar on the example of adaptive management in the Everglades (p. 43) is very informative, it would be helpful to include a sidebar example of a successful implementation of adaptive management. A more positive example, perhaps with testimonials from the managers and stakeholders who were involved, would be helpful in encouraging the Delta community to embark on more adaptive management efforts.

Regarding the Suggested Readings section, we suggest adding the following seminal and early references on adaptive management:

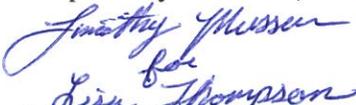
Holling, C.S. (Ed). 1978. Adaptive Environmental Assessment and Management. Wiley International Series on Applied Systems Analysis, Vol. 3. Wiley. Chichester, UK.

Lee, K.N. 1993. Compass and Gyroscope: Integrating Science and Politics for the Environment. Island Press. Washington, D.C.

Overall, we believe that the DISB's Adaptive Management in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Report will be a valuable guide for the Delta community, particularly if its release can be targeted to members of the Delta community who are in the best positions to address the challenges described in the report.

For further information, please contact Timothy Mussen at 916-875-4344 or via email at mussent@sacsewer.com.

Respectfully submitted,


for

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Respectfully submitted,


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Linda Dorn, Regional San