

## Options for New and Improved Conveyance, Storage, and Operation of Both to Achieve the Coequal Goals – Council Principles

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**Summary:** Staff will present a revised set of guiding principles that the Council can consider and use to update the Delta Plan to promote options for new and improved infrastructure relating to the water conveyance in the Delta, storage systems, and for the operation of both to achieve the coequal goals (Water Code section 85304). In revising these principles, staff has incorporated comments and suggestions provided by Council members, by other state agencies, and from experts who participated on panels during the September meeting.

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### **Background**

Water Code section 85304 requires the Delta Plan to promote options for new and improved infrastructure relating to the water conveyance in the Delta, storage systems, and for the operation of both to achieve the coequal goals. To promote options for water conveyance infrastructure in the Delta, the 2013 Delta Plan recommended the prompt and successful completion of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). Appendix A of the Delta Plan describes the Council's role in the BDCP and provides, in part, that "should the BDCP process not be completed by January 1, 2016, the Council intends to revisit the issue of conveyance to determine how to facilitate improved conveyance facilities without the BDCP."

This April, the Administration announced a new preferred alternative to the BDCP. The new alternative would not complete the BDCP as a Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), but instead proposes construction of water conveyance facilities through an initiative called California WaterFix. A parallel effort called California EcoRestore proposes to accelerate implementation of a suite of habitat restoration actions being planned in the Delta.

If the BDCP had been incorporated into the Delta Plan, it would have added significant detail to the Delta Plan's provisions about water conveyance, system operations, ecosystem restoration (including restoration performance measures), adaptive management, Delta governance, and finance. In light of the recent changes to the BDCP, and the absence of the BDCP as an NCCP, the Council may wish to consider updates to the Delta Plan to further address those topics. The Delta Reform Act gives the Council latitude to consider such updates, providing that the Council may revise the plan as it deems appropriate.

Starting with the June 2015 Council meeting, the Council has discussed various aspects of this topic, including:

- At the June 25 meeting, the Council received information on the recent changes to the BDCP. During this discussion several Council members indicated they

would be supportive of updating the Delta Plan to provide additional guidance – in the form of either recommendations or regulatory policies – about conveyance, storage, and the operation of both. This guidance could be formulated in two steps: first, in the form of high-level principles to provide a prompt response to the shift in the BDCP; and second, with subsequent consideration for how those principles should be reflected in potential updates to the Delta Plan

- At the July meeting staff provided a list of key historical milestones describing California’s approach to conveyance, storage, and water operations. A preliminary problem statement to frame the Council’s discussion of conveyance, storage, and water operations was presented by staff. The Council also heard from a series of panels comprised of policy experts, water managers, scientists, and academics providing recommendations to the Council as it considered developing a set of high-level principles.
- At the August meeting staff provided an updated problem statement reflecting suggestions by Council members; introduced a preliminary set of draft conveyance, storage, and water operations principles; and convened a panel of water policy experts with extensive experience in approaching California’s water supply challenges, who provided their initial reaction to the draft principles and made suggestions for improvement. In addition to seeking input from the panel, staff distributed the draft principles to various state agencies who are involved in the planning, funding, operating, or regulating of new conveyance infrastructure or storage systems.

### **Best Available Science**

The Delta Reform Act requires that the Delta Plan “be based on the best available scientific information” (Water Code section 85308(a)). The Delta Science Program staff have summarized the scientific information contained in the existing Delta Plan pertaining to water supply, including storage, Delta conveyance, and their operation; the ecosystem; and climate change. This document (Attachment 2) also includes new and updated scientific information that has been generated since the adoption of the Delta Plan in 2013. Staff used the updated information provided by the Delta Science Program when developing the draft principles.

### **Today’s Briefing**

Staff is providing a revised set of draft principles on Delta conveyance infrastructure, water storage systems, and the operation of both (Attachment 1). The revisions reflect best available science input from the Delta Science Program, comments from Council members and panel members, and comments received from other state agencies.

**Agenda Item: 10**  
**Meeting Date: October 22-23, 2015**  
**Page 3**

Staff will incorporate any additional comments received from the Council to further refine the draft principles. At the November meeting, staff anticipates providing final draft language for the Council to consider adopting.

**List of Attachments**

Attachment 1: Draft Principles for Water Conveyance in the Delta, Storage Systems and for the Operation of Both to Achieve the Coequal Goals

Attachment 2: Delta Plan Summary and New Scientific Findings for Delta Plan Update in Storage, Conveyance, and Operation

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