

I. Bills

AB 1755 by Assemblymember Dodd would establish a clearinghouse that would be overseen a public benefit corporation and would integrate existing water and ecosystem data into a single portal.

Sponsored by the Bay Area Council and supported by groups such as the Water Foundation and the Nature Conservancy, the bill also seeks to integrate water transfer information into a separate public database.

A related bill, AB 2304 by Assemblymember Levine would establish the California Water Market Exchange and would require the exchange to create a centralized platform that provides information regarding water available for transfer. Sponsored by the Environmental Defense Fund, the bill would prescribe a number of conditions that must be met prior to a transfer taking place and would place a fee on each transfer to cover the operating costs of the proposed exchange entity.

Given the related nature of both bills, the authors will likely continue to discuss how each can be complimentary of the other measure going forward. Both bills passed out of the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee last Tuesday and now move onto Appropriations.

II. State Legislation (AB 2583 and AB 1713)

Next, an update on the two bills dealing with WaterFix that I discussed last month – AB 2583 (Frazier), which would have added additional Delta Plan consistency conditions for a conveyance project and AB 1713 (Eggman), which would require a public vote on a Delta conveyance project, both had their first policy committee hearings last week. While AB 2583 failed to receive sufficient votes, AB 1713 did pass out by a vote of 8-4 and will now move on to the Assembly's fiscal committee.

III. Federal Bills

The House Appropriations Committee advanced a spending bill last week, which included some California-drought related provisions such as mandated pumping levels from the Delta and the elimination of federal funding for the San Joaquin River Restoration project. Given that a number of these drought-related provisions are similar to those found in Congressman Valadao's drought measure that the House passed last July and that the Senate has yet to consider, one could speculate that this bill as it's currently constructed could face similar challenges should it get to the senior house.

The second item to highlight relates to Congressman Jeff Denham and House Resolution 4582, which attempts to further protect California salmon and steelhead populations by eliminating the doubling requirement for striped bass that was first established by the Central Valley Project Improvement Act in 1992. Introduced in February, the White House announced just last week its support for the bill's concept, so this one bears watching as the session progresses.

III. Budget

As you may recall, the Council's budget proposal that seeks \$1.45 million to amend the Delta Plan for the next two fiscal years and \$2.1 million in ongoing funding for critical science investigations was approved by the Assembly Budget Subcommittee by a vote of 3-0 in late March. The Senate Budget Subcommittee took up the item earlier this month and by a vote of 2-1 approved the proposal; meaning the additional funds will be included in the final budget that the Legislature will send to the Governor in June.