



980 NINTH STREET, SUITE 1500  
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814  
HTTP://DELTACOUNCIL.CA.GOV  
(916) 445-5511

# DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

*A California State Agency*

January 23, 2019

Kamyar Guivetchi  
California Department of Water Resources  
Strategic Water Planning Branch  
Statewide Integrated Water Management  
P.O. Box 942836  
Sacramento, CA 94236  
cwpc@water.ca.gov

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## RE: Comments on the Water Plan Update 2018 Public Review Draft (December 2018)

Dear Mr. Guivetchi:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Public Review Draft (PRD) of Water Plan Update 2018 (Update 2018). The Council previously commented on the Preliminary Draft (October 2017) and on a presentation you made before the Council in November 2017. We are pleased to see how far the Water Plan has come since that time. Please consider this letter in addition to our earlier comments, available online:

- October 2017 Comments: [http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2017/10/WaterPlanComment\\_20171018.pdf](http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2017/10/WaterPlanComment_20171018.pdf)
- February 2018 Comments: <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2018/02/18-0220-Letter%20from%20Jessica%20Law%20to%20DWR%20providing%20additional%20comments%20on%20draft%20Water%20Plan%20Update%202018.pdf>

As you know, the Council was established by the Delta Reform Act of 2009 (Delta Reform Act), and is an independent state agency charged with furthering California's coequal goals for the Delta through the adoption and implementation of the Delta Plan. As stated in the Delta Reform Act, the state has "Coequal goals" (which) means two goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place" (Water Code section 85054).

Overall, Council staff supports the direction of the PRD of Update 2018. The work that has been put into it is evident, and the draft is substantially more concise and readable than past versions. Within this letter we do not highlight areas with which the Council staff agrees – which makes up most of the PRD. Rather, for brevity, we highlight areas below where we feel the PRD could be improved.

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*"Coequal goals" means the two goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place."*

– CA Water Code §85054



### **Completeness of Information**

On page 2-2, the PRD refers to the challenge of “Reduced Access to Clean, Safe, Reliable, and Affordable Water Supplies.” This topic is raised frequently by stakeholders that attend Delta Stewardship Council meetings, as well as public meetings at other state agencies such as DWR and the State Water Resources Control Board. This is a critical challenge and we are encouraged that it is highlighted here. However, there is no accompanying reference to California’s Human Right to Water law included in the references or acknowledgement of the environmental justice component of such reduced access. We encourage DWR to make this link more explicit and have provided comments on the environmental justice component in our previous letter of October 18, 2017.

### **Reduced Reliance on the Delta**

As also noted in our February 2018 comment letter, the Delta Reform Act lays out the State’s policy to reduce reliance on the Delta through improved regional water self-reliance. This is primarily achieved through strategies promoted in previous Water Plans, including increased conservation and local reliable water supply development. It is important for Update 2018 to stress this required linkage between regional resilience and reduced reliance on Delta exports. Reduced reliance on the Delta is implemented in part through Delta Plan Water Reliability Policy 1 (**WR P1**), which requires covered actions certifying consistency with the Delta Plan to demonstrate reduced reliance on the Delta.<sup>1,2</sup> In addition, WR P1 supports significant parts of Update 2018, including helping to address Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta conflicts. Currently, the PRD does not refer to the requirement to reduce reliance on the Delta or how this relates to statewide planning requirements. Although Update 2018 is focused at the entire state, it should highlight reduced reliance on the Delta as a key state policy and regulatory requirement, as well as how its implementation can support the high-level goals of Update 2018.

### **Organization of Information**

The PRD lists critical challenges to the “state’s ability to manage water resources for sustainability” on pages 2-1 through 2-4. These challenges could be categorized or reordered to group similar categories and align with the order of recommended actions and funding needs under later chapters. Many of the challenges noted appear to fall under impacts from climate change, conflicts concerning land and water management, or funding. For example “Reduced Access to Clean, Safe, Reliable, and Affordable Water Supplies” and “Unstable Regional Economies” have economic linkages that could be reflected by grouping them. The PRD could also follow similar organization under Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Currently, the order of priorities under Chapter 2 does not align with the specific actions recommended under Chapter 3. This could be reordered by using similar top-level headers for challenges under Chapter 2 and goals under Chapter 3.

The PRD could also link the critical challenges listed in Chapter 2 to specific recommended actions in Chapter 3. For example, on page 2-4, the PRD notes the challenge of “Fragmented and Non-Coordinated Initiatives and Governance”. This is a statewide issue, and is relevant to the Delta. It would be helpful to connect the description of the challenge here to specific actions, if this does not unnecessarily lengthen the document. The PRD currently uses this approach to connect Chapter 3 actions to Chapter 4 funding needs.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/docs/wr-p1>

<sup>2</sup> <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/covered-actions>

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## **References**

On page 2-3, the PRD describes several critical challenges to manage water resources in a sustainable manner, including conflicts relating to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta). We appreciate this acknowledgement of the conflicts in the Delta and the connection to statewide water management. However, the citation offered refers to a 2016 document from DWR and the USBR, and could not be located in the references list. We encourage DWR to add this reference and to also cite to the 2009 Delta Reform Act, which similarly acknowledges challenges in the Delta and resulted in the creation of the Delta Stewardship Council and Delta Plan.

In Chapter 5, please update references to include a link to the document online, when available. In addition, on page FCSP-2, the PRD makes reference to the "Delta Plan (Delta Stewardship Council (2017)". The Delta Plan was first approved in 2013 and recently updated in 2018.

Council staff appreciated the opportunity to hear from DWR at the November 2017 Council meeting, at public meetings on Update 2018 held over the last year, and the opportunity to comment once again on the PRD of Update 2018. If you would like to discuss further, or have any questions, please contact me at (916) 445-0258 or [jeff.henderson@deltacouncil.ca.gov](mailto:jeff.henderson@deltacouncil.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Henderson", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jeff Henderson, AICP  
Deputy Executive Officer  
Delta Stewardship Council

cc: Cindy Messer, Chief Deputy Director, California Department of Water Resources.