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# News Release

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Third Staff Draft of Delta Plan Released

*Extensive Public Comment Improves Delta Plan from First, Second Staff Drafts*

SACRAMENTO – The third staff draft of the Delta Plan has been released and is posted on the DSC website: [http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/draft\\_delta\\_plans.html](http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/draft_delta_plans.html). This staff draft reconnects the revised findings from the first staff draft with the regulations and recommendations from the second staff draft.

“The findings and recommendations from previous drafts are now clear and concise with the new draft release,” said Joe Grindstaff Executive Officer of the Delta Stewardship Council. “The improvements are due largely to the extensive public input received.”

A first staff draft was released in February, a second last month, and a fourth will be posted in mid-May before an official public review draft Delta Plan and an Environmental Impact Report are released in June, 2011. Following a 45-day review period, additional drafts and comment periods will extend through the fall before the Council’s expected adoption of a final Delta Plan in November, 2011.

The first staff draft included initial findings, or perceived problems, about the Delta based on science, government reports, and other information. The second staff draft focused on introducing regulations and recommendations to address those problems. This third staff draft synthesizes the findings into clear problem statements and reasoning behind how each draft regulation relates to the stated problems.

“We have come a long way from our first staff draft. The problem statements improve the readability of the document, as well as the clarity of what we’re trying to achieve in the Delta Plan,” said Grindstaff.

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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

Council releases third draft Delta Plan

April 25, 2011

Page 2

### **Key Policy Considerations in this staff draft**

At this stage in the development of the staff drafts, there are many major policy conclusions, including:

- **Linked Recommendations:** The major policy elements central to our mandate – water reliability, protection and improvement of the Delta ecosystem, improved water quality, risk reduction from flooding, and protecting the unique rural and agricultural culture of the Delta – are inevitably linked to each other and cannot be addressed in isolation.
- **Water Conveyance and Water Storage:** The coequal goals cannot be achieved without improvements in conveyance and additional water storage.
- **Regional Self-Reliance:** The most important short-term way to improve water supply reliability is to focus on increasing regional self-reliance.
- **Public Trust Delta Water Flow Standards:** The coequal goals can only be met if enforceable public trust flow standards for the Delta are developed.
- **An Improved Delta Ecosystem:** The habitat needs of the Delta are many, but because we cannot do all of them at once or even in the next decade, we must prioritize.
- **Reduced Risk in the Delta:** The draft Delta Plan calls for land uses in the Delta to be consistent with current levels of flood protection.

The third staff draft will be the focus of the Stewardship Council meeting April 28-29 in West Sacramento and issues will be explored in detail at a Council workshop on May 12-13. Following these meetings, revisions will be made for a fourth staff draft that is expected to be released in mid-May.

Then an official public review draft Delta Plan and programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be released in June, 2011 as part of the formal review process and solicitation of public comment. It is anticipated that subsequent drafts of the Plan may be necessary to respond to public comments, leading up to the adoption of the final EIR and Delta Plan at the November Council meeting, in time to meet state regulatory requirements.

The Council is expected to adopt a final Delta Plan in November, 2011 to meet its statutory deadline to adopt and begin implementation by January, 2012 as directed by the Delta Reform Act of 2009.

Council releases third draft Delta Plan

April 25, 2011

Page 3

A copy of the previous drafts of the Delta Plan, as well as all public comments and a release schedule of subsequent staff drafts can be reviewed at this web address:

[http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/draft\\_delta\\_plans.html](http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/draft_delta_plans.html)

***About the Council***

Created by the legislature in 2009, the Delta Stewardship Council is composed of members who represent different parts of the state and offer diverse expertise in fields such as agriculture, science, the environment, and public service. Of the seven, four are appointed by the Governor, one each by the Senate and Assembly, and the seventh is the Chair of the Delta Protection Commission. For more information visit <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/>

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