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News Release

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Delta Plan Close to Completion

*Council Takes Written Comments on Recirculated
Draft Environmental Impact Report and Draft Rulemaking Package*

SACRAMENTO – The Delta Stewardship Council (DSC) is today posting its Final Draft Delta Plan as well as making available for public review and comment two documents that will inform its ultimate decision on the Plan and associated regulations. When completed, the Delta Plan and its regulations will:

- **Create a single blue print for state and local agencies' action** to provide a more reliable water supply for California and restore the Delta ecosystem;
- **Create new rules for significant state and local agency actions** occurring wholly or partly within the Delta, with the Council as an appellate body to enforce those rules in a fair and timely manner;
- **Create a unified science initiative and improved accountability** to achieve the co-equal goals in the Delta;
- **Create an effective interagency coordination body to implement the Delta Plan.**

The Final Draft of the Delta Plan can be viewed at this web address: <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-plan/current-draft-of-delta-plan>. The other documents being released are a Recirculated Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (new Volume 3), and draft regulations based on policies contained in the Final Draft Delta Plan.

“After two years of arduous study and challenging compromise, a comprehensive management plan for the Delta is now within reach,” said Delta Stewardship Council Chair Phil Isenberg. “We will soon be able to focus on implementing the principles and recommendations that will help achieve the State’s coequal goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem while protecting the unique values of the Delta as an evolving place.”

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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

In November 2011, the DSC released a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (2011 DPEIR), which reviewed the possible environmental consequences of the Fifth Staff Draft of the Delta Plan. The written comments the Council received on the 2011 DPEIR, as well as the draft Plan, resulted in several changes to the draft Plan. For instance:

- The Final Draft contains expanded discussions of the background and the need for proposed policies and recommendations.
- Two new policies and 19 recommendations, derived from recommendations of the Delta Protection Commission, were added that provide increased emphasis on protecting farmland and other land uses in the Delta and enhance the Delta's economy, including tourism and recreation.
- Many of the policies and recommendations in the Fifth Staff Draft have been revised and reorganized, including modifying several policies to make them recommendations. Burdensome rules have been minimized and opportunities have been strengthened for agencies and stakeholders to work together.
- Performance measures to track progress in implementation the Delta Plan were added. Issues have been identified for future evaluation and coordination.

Although its environmental consequences would not differ substantially from those of the Fifth Staff Draft, an additional DPEIR volume analyzing the Final Draft Delta Plan is being circulated for public review and comment to fulfill the DSC's commitment to transparency and stakeholder involvement. The Recirculated DPEIR (Volume 3) can be viewed at this web address: <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/recirculated-draft-programmatic-eir>.

The Recirculated DPEIR (Volume 3) has a 45-day public comment period extending through Jan. 14, 2013 to allow stakeholders and the general public an opportunity to comment on the document. The Council requests that comments be limited to the Recirculated DPEIR (Volume 3). The Council will respond to those comments, and previously-submitted comments on the 2011 DPEIR, in a 2013 Final PEIR.

Concurrently, the DSC is commencing the state rulemaking process to turn the suite of 14 draft policies in the Delta Plan into legally enforceable state regulations. The draft Rulemaking Package can be viewed at this web address: <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/regulations-and-rulemaking-process>.

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A separate 45-day public review and written comment period on the draft regulations will similarly extend through Jan. 14, 2013. A specific rulemaking hearing will also be held by the DSC after the written comment period closes.

The Council will consider public comments received through both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and rulemaking process before certifying the Final PEIR and adopting both the Delta Plan and its associated regulations.

It is currently anticipated that the Delta Plan and regulations will be adopted by the Council in Spring 2013, and that the regulations will take effect in Summer 2013.

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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/>