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# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Council Adopts final Delta Plan

*Plan's portfolio of actions improves water supply reliability, preserves and restores the ecosystem, and protects and enhances the Delta*

SACRAMENTO – After eight drafts, almost 100 public meetings, and nearly 10,000 individual comments, the Delta Stewardship Council (DSC) Thursday (May 16) adopted a comprehensive management plan for the Delta. The Council also certified the final Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), and adopted regulations that will implement the policies of the Delta Plan.

“State law told us to develop a legally enforceable Delta Plan that will guide state and local agency actions on water use and the Delta environment,” said Delta Stewardship Council Chair Phil Isenberg. “We will now be able to focus on implementing the policies 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.”

The Delta Plan is *California’s* plan for the Delta and is intended to be a single enforceable blueprint that requires and encourages sustainable actions now, and lays a strong foundation for future projects and programs that will improve statewide water supply reliability, provide a vibrant and healthy ecosystem, and preserve, protect and enhance the rural, agricultural and recreational characteristics of the Delta. The Plan will eventually include the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) when the BDCP is completed and successfully permitted.

To complement the improved conveyance and restoration of Delta habitats addressed in the BDCP, the Delta Plan also recommends a portfolio of other actions including improved efficiency, more storage, the development of other local water supplies, protection of Delta farmlands and communities, and the improvement of Delta levees.

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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 Adopts Final Delta Plan

May 16, 2013

Page Two of Three

The Delta Plan and its regulations create:

- A single blueprint for state and local agencies' actions to provide a more reliable water supply for California, and protect, restore and enhance the Delta ecosystem;
- A unified science initiative and improved accountability to achieve the co-equal goals in the Delta;
- An effective interagency coordination body to implement the portfolio of actions detailed in the Delta Plan; and
- Ensure that significant state and local agency actions occurring wholly or partly within the Delta are consistent with the Delta Plan, with the Council as an appellate body to enforce those rules in a fair and timely manner.

Through 14 enforceable regulatory policies and 73 non-binding recommendations, the Delta Plan:

- Improves water supply reliability and reduces reliance on water from the Delta watershed through better water management throughout California and by investing in improved local and regional supplies and water use efficiency. The Plan also calls for improved Delta conveyance and expansion of groundwater and surface storage.
- Protects, restores and enhances the Delta ecosystem by protecting six high priority locations in the Delta and Suisun Marsh to recover endangered species, rebuild salmon runs and enhance habitat for wildlife. The Plan also prioritizes actions to reduce pollution, invasive species and impacts of other ecosystem stressors and seeks to establish a more natural pattern of water flows in the Delta.
- Protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, and agricultural values of the California Delta as an evolving place by protecting rural lands for agriculture and requiring that new residential, commercial or industrial development is located in areas planned for urban use, encouraging recreation and tourism, and by ensuring a role for Delta voices in significant projects.
- Improves water quality to protect human health and the environment by making 12 recommendations, including that the State Water Resources Control Board consider special water quality protections for priority habitat restoration areas, complete development of a strategic work plan to protect groundwater resources, and work with other relevant agencies to develop and implement a Delta regional water quality monitoring program.

## Council Adopts Final Delta Plan

May 16, 2013

Page Two of Three

- Reduces risks to people, property, and state interests in the Delta by policies prohibiting encroachment on floodways and floodplains, require a minimum level of flood protection for new residential development of five or more parcels, and requiring the Council to develop priorities for investment in Delta flood protection by 2015.
- Integrates governmental actions in the Delta with best available science through 14 legally-binding regulatory policies, with which significant state and local agency, Delta-related actions must be consistent.

Now that the adoption and certification processes are complete, the Council will submit the package of proposed rules and a Statement of Reason to the State Office of Administrative Law (OAL). The Statement of Reason is considered a significant component in how the entire document is presented to the OAL, the state agency that ensures the proposed regulations in the final draft Delta Plan are drafted appropriately.

Once the OAL approves the package of proposed regulations and the Statement of Reason, the documents are then submitted to the CA Secretary of State. Upon approval from that office, the proposed policies in the Delta Plan become enforceable regulations. That action is expected to occur sometime between July 1 and October 1, 2013.

The Council will also begin to implement the Delta Plan through an Implementation Committee made up of state and federal agencies that are responsible for the actions proposed in the Delta Plan.

“Today marks the point at which planning shifts into action,” said Chris Knopp, Delta Stewardship Council Executive Officer. “Beginning immediately, we will focus on supporting actions necessary to provide a more reliable supply of water, to restore the Delta ecosystem, and to protect the Delta as a unique place. By achieving some initial success, we hope to move from endless debate and protection of self-interest to a new paradigm where people are willing to collaborate and give well thought out solutions a try.”

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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/>