

## U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Action Plan for the San Francisco Bay Delta Estuary

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**Summary:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has released an Action Plan that proposes seven measures for improving water quality, restoring aquatic habitat, and improving the management of the San Francisco Bay Delta Estuary. Representatives from the USEPA will provide an overview of the Action Plan at the September 27 Council meeting.

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### **Background**

On August 28, 2012, the USEPA released its Bay Delta Action Plan (Attachment 1) that proposes seven measures for improving water quality, restoring aquatic habitat, and improving the management of the San Francisco Bay Delta Estuary. The release of this Action Plan follows the USEPA's analysis concluding that existing federal and state water quality programs are not adequately safeguarding the ecosystem. USEPA previously presented their Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on this matter to the Delta Stewardship Council on February 24, 2011. Seven stressors affecting fish were considered in EPA's review: ammonia, selenium, pesticides, emerging contaminants, declining estuarine habitat, fragmented migratory corridors for fish, and wetlands loss.

### **What does the Action Plan recommend?**

The Action Plan prioritizes the following seven actions to be pursued in partnership with the State Water Resources Control Board, the Regional Water Boards for the Central Valley and San Francisco Bay, the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, and numerous other state and federal agencies:

- By 2013, propose a standard to curb selenium discharges from cities, farms, and oil refineries;
- By 2013, achieve organophosphate pesticide water quality goals in Sacramento County urban streams;
- By 2014, set new estuarine habitat standards, including salinity, to improve conditions for aquatic life;
- By 2017 establish a monitoring and assessment program for water quality in the Delta;
- Ensure that USEPA's pesticide regulation program more fully considers the effects that pesticides have on aquatic life;
- Restore and rebuild wetlands and floodplains to sequester drinking water contaminants, methylmercury, and greenhouse gases and make the Delta more resilient to floods, earthquakes, and climate change;
- Support the development and implementation of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan.

The US EPA Action Plan acknowledges that the above measures are not sufficient to resolve the issues that have led to the environmental decline in the Bay-Delta ecosystem, and that any solution must be multi-faceted, including providing sufficient flows, physical habitat which is sufficiently large, connected, diverse, and self-sustaining, as well as a reduction of many types of stressors, such as contaminants, invasive species, and predation.

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Attachment 1  
US EPA Bay Delta Action Plan