

## Delta Levee Investment Strategy Update

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**Summary:** This report is another in a series of updates on the Delta Stewardship Council's (Council) activities related to the Delta Levee Investment Strategy. The focus this month is on progress related to formation of an independent review panel to ensure that the strategy is based on the best scientific and other technical information available. Staff also will report on progress to date on efforts related to public outreach, developing a risk reduction white paper, and data compilation.

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### **Background**

The Delta Reform Act states "The Delta Plan shall attempt to reduce risks to people, property, and state interests in the Delta by promoting effective emergency preparedness, appropriate land uses, and strategic levee investments" (Water Code Section 85305(a)). In addition, "The council, in consultation with the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, shall recommend in the Delta Plan priorities for State investments in levee operation, maintenance, and improvements in the Delta, including both levees that are a part of the State Plan of Flood Control and non-project levees" (Water Code Section 85306).

In the Delta Plan, the Council directs itself, in consultation with the Department of Water Resources (DWR), the Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB), the Delta Protection Commission (DPC), local agencies, and the California Water Commission to implement Water Code Section 85306 by developing funding priorities for State investments in Delta levees by January 1, 2015 (Delta Plan recommendation RR R4 *Actions for the Prioritization of State Investments in Delta Levees*).

The Delta Reform Act also requires that the Delta Plan be based on best available science and independent scientific advice (Water Code Section 85308). To meet that directive, this project includes an independent scientific review panel to ensure that the methodology developed is based on the best scientific and other technical information available.

### **Independent Scientific Review Panel**

The Delta Science Program will undertake convening and coordinating the independent scientific review panel and its activities, in accordance with the Delta Science Program's policy and procedures for independent scientific review that are included in the Delta Science Plan (December 2013, Attachment 1).

Per the Delta Science Program's policy and procedure for independent scientific review, the Delta Lead Scientist, Dr. Peter Goodwin, will make the final selection of the

independent scientific review panel members and will finalize the charge. To assist him, Council staff has coordinated two planning meetings that have included Council staff as well as staff from Department of Water Resources, the Delta Protection Commission, and the Central Valley Flood Protection Board.

The selection of panelists is based, in part, on an individual's standing in the scientific community, local knowledge, expertise in the selected disciplinary areas, technical ability relevant to the documents and technical issues subject to review, and an absence of a demonstrated conflict of interest. The panel as a whole is expected to have a broad range of expertise including familiarity with risk management, flood management, hydrology, geotechnical/seismic issues, integrated modeling, human and social issues, environmental issues, land use changes, and economics.

After considering input provided by participants in the planning meetings, Dr. Goodwin approved a list of nominations for the panel and he and the Science Program staff are contacting and coordinating with individuals to secure their participation. First on board is Dr. James K. Mitchell, who will chair the panel. Dr. Mitchell previously served as a professor of civil engineering at the University of California, Berkeley, as the chairman of the Geotechnical Board of the National Research Council, and vice president of the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering. Presently, he serves as chair of the Committee on Organizing to Manage Construction and Infrastructure in the 21st Century (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation).

The next steps in this process are to fill the remaining panel member positions. Science Program staff continues to contact and coordinate with potential panel members.

Additionally, a charge for the independent scientific review panel is currently being drafted. Through extensive discussion and coordination between Dr. Goodwin, Council staff and participants of the planning meetings a draft charge has been developed. Finalization of the charge is pending several details related to the computer-based tool that will be developed as part of this project.

### **Other Activities**

During the past month Council staff has been working on tasks related to outreach and communications preparation; an issue paper about risk reduction; compiling data to develop methodology for the investment strategy, and formation of the independent scientific review panel.

Specifically staff has:

- Worked to develop a detailed communication strategy and outreach plan that identifies many of the key Delta stakeholders who should be engaged in this process, it also includes a schedule of key events and milestones and a description of discussion topics for outreach meetings. This plan will be

completed in early September and initial outreach meetings are being scheduled now.

- Launched a webpage on the Council's website dedicated to this project. The page can be viewed at (<http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-levee-investment-strategy>).
- Continued drafting a risk reduction white paper that addresses the Council's overall Delta risk reduction vision and identifies how the Delta Levee Investment Strategy fits into this vision.
- Coordinated with DWR and other agencies to compile data sources that will be used to develop the methodology for this project, reviewed and transferred existing data to the ARCADIS team, and where necessary, have begun to identify and document information gaps.

### **List of Attachments**

Attachment 1: Delta Science Program Policy and Procedures for Independent Scientific Review (Delta Science Plan, December 2013)

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