

LO211 MWDSC



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

February 2, 2012

Phil Isenberg, Chairman
Delta Stewardship Council
980 Ninth Street, Suite 1500
Sacramento, CA 95814

(submitted electronically)

Dear Chairman Isenberg and Members of the Council:

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) writes to provide some overall comments on the 5th draft Delta Plan and the Delta Plan Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (draft EIR) released by the Delta Stewardship Council (Council) on November 4, 2011. Metropolitan supports the comments filed by the State Water Contractors and the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority. Metropolitan writes here to emphasize a few key points and encourage the Delta Stewardship Council (Council) to incorporate the considerable feedback provided by public water agencies in the upcoming 6th plan draft. LO211-1

Metropolitan is a cooperative of 26 cities and water agencies serving 19 million people in six counties across southern California. Metropolitan imports water from the Colorado River and from northern California to supplement local supplies, and, in addition, helps its members develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage, and other resource-management programs. LO211-2

In the Delta Reform Act of 2009 the California Legislature declared that the policy of California is to pursue the coequal goals of ensuring a more reliable water supply for California and to protect, restore, and enhance the Delta ecosystem. The legislation created the Council to develop a Delta Plan that would pursue the coequal goals.

The fifth draft Delta Plan developed by Council staff sets forth 12 regulatory policies. Metropolitan has commented on these policies in the past through the State and Federal Contractors Water Authority. Those comments remain relevant, but we wish to emphasize a few additional points.

It is Metropolitan's opinion, that good governance requires that the Council work toward an efficient and effective way to guide federal, state and local agencies in achieving the coequal goals. The Council, as an appellate body for "covered actions" in the Delta, is charged with finding a way to coordinate with agencies and local jurisdictions to identify the impediments to reaching the coequal goals and LO211-3

Response to comment LO211-1

Comment noted.

Response to comment LO211-2

Comment noted.

Response to comment LO211-3

This is a comment on the project, not on the EIR.

Mr. Phil Isenberg
Page 2
February 2, 2012

identifying solutions to those issues. We believe that local issues outside of the Delta, such as water planning and conservation investments, have their own legal requirements and are driven by state legislative mandates and local needs to diversify water supplies and control demand and we urge the Council to use its limited resources to address issues within its jurisdiction. For example, on actions that take place within the Delta, Southern California water agencies have developed and implemented a proactive local water management approach, investing millions of dollars in conservation, recycled water, desalination, groundwater management, and improving local storage. To reach beyond the Delta in analyzing local water supply planning and investments, takes time and resources. We believe the Council could use its time and resources to address crucial concerns within the Delta.

LO211-3

The public water agencies that use water exported through the Delta are considering investing billions of dollars through the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) to restore water reliability while working towards Delta recovery efforts. The draft plan and the draft EIR suggest that those investments may actually decrease export reliability. Metropolitan urges the Council to consider these potential investments in the coequal goals and the language of the Delta Reform Act as it works to produce a sixth draft Plan. A successful BDCP is a stated goal of the Brown Administration and is strongly supported by Metropolitan. We urge that the sixth draft of the Delta Plan establish a workable and efficient process for the Council to consider and aid the BDCP, both as it is crafted and as it is implemented.

LO211-4

Numerous water agencies have expressed and supported these concerns via multiple letters and comments and have proposed an alternate Delta Plan approach proposed and supported by various agricultural and urban interests throughout the state.

Metropolitan acknowledges and commends the lengthy public process the Council has undertaken to devise a Delta Plan that helps advance the coequal goals. A revised sixth draft will be crucial to further advance this process. Likewise, Metropolitan believes an amended draft EIR is key to identifying a solution to address the various issues raised in the many comments which have been submitted. A successful Delta Plan will limit review by the Council of local water management decisions to an absolute minimum and help reduce barriers to improving water supply reliability and promoting restoration of the Delta ecosystem. This is a very important stage to ensure that a final Delta Plan gains widespread support.

LO211-5



Jeffrey Kightlinger
General Manager
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Response to comment LO211-4

The proposed BDCP is a reasonably foreseeable future project that is being evaluated by the Department of Water Resources as the CEQA lead agency. The cumulative impacts of the proposed Delta Plan, in combination with the impact of the proposed BDCP, are described in EIR Sections 22 and 23. Please refer to Master Response 1.

Response to comment LO211-5

Comment noted.