



February 21, 2013

Mr. Phil Isenberg
Chairman
Delta Stewardship Council
980 Ninth Street, Suite 1500
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Isenberg,

Southern California Water Committee joins public water agencies, business organizations, farmers, labor unions and many others in their concerns about the recently released NRDC "portfolio" proposal, which is being offered as an alternative to Bay Delta Conservation Plan's twin-tunnel concept. The reduction in water supplies that would result from the smaller, 3,000 cfs tunnel would have significant impacts throughout the state. We've been hearing about how the expansion of local water supplies is impossible in the San Joaquin Valley, but it's important to also note that even in Southern California's urban areas, local water supply expansion comes with challenges. For example, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power has lost approximately half of its historic San Fernando Valley groundwater supplies because of "superfund" contamination. The bottom line is, even as we work to expand local water supplies in Southern California, local water simply can't make up for the significant loss of water supplies from the State Water Project that would result from this alternative proposal.

In Southern California, the low salinity water supplies that come from the State Water Project are a critical element to the management of our watersheds and the development of new local water supplies like recycled water, groundwater storage and conjunctive use projects. The water quality benefits of State Water Project supplies compared to Colorado River supplies are very significant. Without the relatively low salinity water from the State Water Project, Southern California would not be able to comply with the State Water Resources Control Board 2009 Recycled Water Policy. In fact, the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board has mandated that only State Water Project supplies can be used in the upper Santa Ana River watershed to allow for recycled water use to maintain salt balance within the watershed.

Additionally, the cost of local water supplies is substantial and should not be overlooked. Alternative new local supplies in Southern California have average unit costs in excess of \$1,000 per acre-foot and some are double that. Alternative local water supplies, such as stormwater, recycled water, groundwater recovery and desalination, are important, but would not eliminate the need for imported water from the Delta. State Water Project water is a critical base supply embedded in the local water





infrastructure for a significant portion of Southern California, including, the Santa Clara River watershed, Upper Santa Ana River watershed, the Antelope Valley region and Mojave River watershed.

California needs to invest in a new water delivery system for the Delta. A smaller, cheaper facility may be enticing on the surface, but it is not a responsible long-term investment. Cheaper is not always better. Let's do what we originally set out to do and build a facility that meets the needs of the environment and the needs of Californians.

The Southern California Water Committee represents approximately 200 member organizations from Kern County through San Diego, including leaders from business, regional and local government, agricultural groups, water agencies, as well as the general public.

Sincerely,

Richard W Atwater
Southern California Water Committee

