

**Final Staff Draft Delta Plan
Statement of P. Joseph Grindstaff
DSC Executive Officer**

Introductory remarks:

Hello. I am Joe Grindstaff, Executive Officer of the Delta Stewardship Council.

- Today the Delta Stewardship Council staff provided our final draft of the Delta Plan to the seven-member Delta Stewardship Council for review, comment and eventual approval. The previous five drafts were provided to the Council only for review and comment.
- More than 250 different organizations and individuals commented on the draft Delta Plans and Programmatic EIR since the release of the first draft Delta Plan 14 months ago.
- Each comment made to the Delta Plan during this process helped shape the final staff draft in one way or another. Every comment was considered within the context of how it helped meet the coequal goals. Not one goal, which most comments addressed – but both goals, as required by legislation.
- The plan is a common sense approach, informed by the best available science. It is a road map for meeting the coequal goals using a hybrid of policies and collaborative recommendations.

As a reminder, here is some important background information.

- The 2009 Delta Reform Act created the Delta Stewardship Council with the authority and the responsibility to develop a legally-enforceable Delta Plan, and to coordinate across all of the public agencies that have responsibility for some aspect of the Delta.
- This legislation requires the Delta Plan to meet the coequal goals of protecting and enhancing the Delta ecosystem and provide for a more

reliable water supply for California, in a manner that protects and enhances the Delta as an evolving place.

- We cannot wait any longer to get started on achieving the coequal goals. The situation in the Delta gets worse with each passing day, putting California's water supply and public safety at unacceptable risk.
- California's water is both scarce and sometimes mismanaged, and the Delta ecosystem is deteriorating at an alarming rate. Delta communities, farms, transportation, water and power infrastructure face significant flood danger.

Before I get into specifics, here is an overview of the Delta Plan:

- The Delta Plan contains 14 enforceable policies; and 68 recommendations which are not enforceable, but are essential to achieving the coequal goals.
- The policies and recommendations are a mix of near-term and long-term actions. State and local agencies are required to comply with the policies in the Delta Plan.
- The plan sets a unified direction for managing Delta resources. It restricts actions that may cause harm to the Delta, and it highlights activities that should be completed right away to benefit the Delta.
- The plan sets performance measures, which will be updated as new information becomes available, and uses adaptive management to ensure that it is on the right course.
- The plan will be updated at least every five years.

Now I will describe the core strategies and actions in the plan:

- **Reduce reliance on water from the Delta watershed** by investing in improved local regional supplies, conservation and water use efficiency. Water supply reliability will be increased through better water management throughout California, including more conservation, diversification of water supplies, improved Delta conveyance and expansion of groundwater and surface storage.
- **From there, we can deliver water based on actual water supply.** This means that more water will be delivered in wet years and less water will be delivered in dry years. (This is one of the “common sense” approaches I mentioned earlier.) The predictability of available water is key to water supply reliability.
- **Complete and successfully permit the Bay Delta Conservation Plan** as soon as possible to begin the conveyance and ecosystem improvements needed to achieve the coequal goals. Improved conveyance and habitat are among the most essential actions to achieve ecosystem restoration and water quality improvements.
- **Update the new Delta water quality objectives** by June 2014, and new Delta watershed water quality objectives for high-priority tributaries by 2018. More natural flows and improved habitat are among the most essential actions for achieving ecosystem and water quality improvements.
- **Improve flood preparedness and emergency response** by creating the Delta Flood Risk Management District to integrate local agencies, and with the authority to impose appropriate fees for local cost shares. A unified local decision-making body will be more effective than the commendable but uncoordinated efforts of more than 100 flood control entities in the Delta.
- **Reduce Delta exposure to flood risk** by enhancing the Yolo Bypass, improving the Consumnes River-Mokelumne River Confluence, establishing the Lower San Joaquin River Floodplain, and use of setback levees where

feasible. The Delta Plan also prohibits encroachment on floodplains and locating new subdivisions on flood-prone rural lands.

- **Set state priorities for investment in Delta flood protection by 2015.** State investment in flood protection must be appropriate to the uses of land to be protected. The recommendations will be based on the principle that beneficiaries pay, and will include a calculation of the state's interests. The plan recommends that private sector beneficiaries also help pay for flood protection improvements.
- **Restore habitats in five high priority locations** in the Delta and Suisun Marsh to recover endangered species, rebuild salmon runs and enhance other wildlife. The Delta Plan recommends actions to reduce pollution, invasive species, and the impacts of other ecosystem stressors.
- **Protect the Delta as a unique place** by locating new urban development in urban and urbanizing areas, and protecting rural lands for agriculture. Designate the Delta as a National Heritage Area and protect historic communities.

Implementing the Delta Plan

- The Delta Stewardship Council must serve as the coordinator and integrator across disparate agencies with overlapping and sometimes conflicting missions.
- The Council will use a hybrid approach, both regulatory and collaborative, to coordinate across a broad range of entities in order to achieve its policy objectives.
- The Delta Reform Act calls for the Council to establish and oversee an interagency committee to implement the Delta Plan.

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- The committee will identify opportunities for integration and funding needs, while leveraging funding; as well as identifying, coordinating and tracking priority actions for implementing the Delta Plan.

Next steps

- The Council will review and comment on the final staff draft. A final Delta Plan is expected this fall.
- The Council will then submit the final policies to the OAL.

Thank you. I will take questions.

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