



Information Item

Delta Plan Five-Year Review Draft Report

Summary: Staff will present the draft Report summarizing the findings and recommendations of the statutorily required Five-Year Review of the Delta Plan (See Water Code section 85300, subd. (c)). Staff is seeking input from councilmembers regarding the identified key findings and recommendations, the relative priority of recommendations and emerging issues, and next steps for implementation. Staff will incorporate councilmember input from today's meeting into the Final Report, which will also inform future Council workplans.

Background

The Five-Year Review Process

The Delta Reform Act states that "(t)he Council shall review the Delta Plan at least once every five years and may revise it as the Council deems appropriate..." (Water Code section 85300, subd. (c)). To meet this requirement, staff has undertaken extensive review, analysis, stakeholder outreach, and synthesis to prepare draft findings based on lessons learned from the first six years of Delta Plan implementation (2013-2018).

The Delta Plan Five-Year Review has three objectives: 1) to reflect on the successes and challenges of initial efforts across agencies to implement the Delta Plan; 2) to focus and prioritize the Council's near-term future efforts to implement the Delta Plan; and 3) to identify planning topics and emerging issues that may inform future Delta Plan updates. Considering the number of Delta Plan amendments recently completed, or currently underway, the draft Report does not recommend further amendments to the Delta Plan at this time. Staff has prepared a Draft Report (**Attachment 1**) identifying key findings, recommendations, and associated activities for future action that can be used to guide near-term use of Council resources and inform the Council's next workplan.

Update on Staff Activity

To date, staff has completed the following steps to support the review:

- Initial staff assessment of the Delta Plan (*complete: presented at the May 24, 2018 Council meeting*)
- External evaluation of the Delta Plan and implementation efforts: Staff and consultants conducted individual and stakeholder focus group interviews and an online survey to understand how stakeholders view and use the Delta Plan. (*complete: presented at the March 21, 2019 Council meeting*)
- Comprehensive review of each Delta Plan chapter. (*complete: presented at the May 23, 2019 Council meeting*)
- Conducted Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC) surveys and interviews (*complete: presented at the May 23, 2019 Council meeting*)

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- Assessed the Delta Plan covered action process (*complete: presented at the May 23, 2019 Council meeting*).
- Additional assessment and analysis of Delta Plan implementation efforts, including DPIIC, performance measures, and how the Council has influenced Delta funding activities (*complete: presented at the May 23, 2019 Council meeting*).
- Developed draft findings, lessons learned, and recommendations (*complete: presented at the May 23, 2019 Council meeting*).
- Refined draft findings, lessons learned, and recommendations based on input from councilmembers and incorporated these items into a Draft Report (*presented at today's meeting*).

Council Retreat

The Council held a retreat on March 22, 2019 to informally discuss Council authorities, mandates, and priorities. Councilmembers expressed a desire to make greater contributions to the organization's mission. At the retreat, councilmembers identified several priorities, including:

- Ways to expand the Council's role as it relates to DPIIC, specifically using the forum as a venue to influence change;
- Updating and strengthening the Council's communications strategy to ensure consistency, and improve the ability of members to explain or promote the Council's work;
- Providing more outreach to continue to build goodwill in the Delta and elsewhere in the state;
- Gaining a better understanding of the Council's "brand," core messages, and audience; and
- Understanding how the research the Council funds inform actions to improve the Delta, consistent with the Council's goals.

Chapter 4 of the Draft Report specifically addresses each of these items, as described below. Chapter 4 includes recommendations such as:

- Being more proactive in outreach and communication with project proponents in early consultation;
- Expanding the use of Council meetings to communicate upcoming and ongoing early consultations and certifications of consistency;
- Developing specific strategies and approaches for outreach, engagement, and collaboration with implementing agencies; and
- Linking DPIIC agenda items to priority recommendations and administrative performance measures.

Draft Report

The Draft Report summarizes the methods and results of the Five-Year Review, discusses the Council's significant accomplishments over the initial six years, describes the strengths and successes of the Plan, and identifies portions of the Plan where the Council can focus implementation efforts in the near-term. At today's meeting, the Council will have an opportunity to discuss, confirm or modify, and prioritize the areas staff has identified for focused implementation in the next five years. Following the discussion, staff will prepare a final version of the Report incorporating councilmember input.

The five chapters in the Draft Report contain the following information:

Chapter 1. Introduction provides an overview of the establishment of the Delta Stewardship Council, the coequal goals and Delta Reform Act, the broad topics the Delta Plan contains, the purpose of the Five-Year Review, and the specific activities conducted as part of the Five-Year Review process.

Chapter 2. Accomplishments highlights the Council's significant accomplishments over the first six years of Delta Plan implementation, including:

- Implementing a new regulatory framework in the Delta through covered actions;
- Amending and updating the Delta Plan in response to commitments made by the Council and to changing circumstances and conditions in the Delta;
- Coordinating the implementation of the Delta Plan across federal and state agencies by creating and overseeing DPIIC;
- Supporting the Delta Plan using best available science for long-term Delta management through guiding documents and strategic investments; and
- Advancing funding in the Delta by advocating for, and coordinating with agencies to improve, alignment of available funding with the objectives of the Delta Plan.

These accomplishments set the stage for future progress toward implementing the Delta Plan and reinforce the leadership role of the Council in charting the course ahead.

Chapter 3. General Findings and Recommendations discusses how the Delta Plan, in its current form, is effectively guiding the actions of local and state agencies in the Delta and does not require additional immediate changes. The general finding and recommendations are for the Council to focus on implementation activities during the next five years. Providing a stable and consistent Delta Plan and regulatory framework will support the sustained implementation of activities needed to achieve the coequal goals.

Chapter 4. Specific Findings and Recommendations:

Strengthening Plan Implementation describes how focusing Council resources on implementing existing Delta Plan policies and recommendations, rather than further amendments, should be the Council's near-term focus. Based on experience, stakeholder feedback, and analysis of the Delta Plan and subsequent implementation actions, staff has identified seven specific findings to strengthen ongoing Delta Plan implementation. Four specific findings relate to covered actions and include:

- Being proactive in outreach and early consultation;

- Reviewing administrative procedures;
- Communicating adaptive management requirements and focusing on ways to customize the application of the adaptive management framework to specific projects; and
- Improving the use of best available science.

Two findings relate to Delta Plan performance measures to strengthen Plan implementation and include:

- A focus on implementing Delta Plan recommendations; and
- Tracking output/outcome performance measures.

Lastly, one specific finding relates to:

- Staff development and technological advancement by developing an information technology plan to meet technological development needs, developing internal capacity to deploy a variety of communication tools, and investing in resources to support covered actions.

Key Planning Topics and Emerging Issues discusses four planning topics and emerging issues identified as having a specific need for more information and analysis to inform potential future actions. These include:

- Environmental justice and disadvantaged communities;
- Robust treatment of climate change risks to the Delta;
- Federal coordination and participation; and
- Various aspects of Delta as an evolving place.

The Council has already begun to develop additional information related to each of these issues to support future policy decisions or implementation activities, but additional work and deliberation is needed before developing an appropriate policy response.

Chapter 5. Next Steps will describe the next steps the Council would take to implement the priorities identified in the Draft Report. This chapter will be completed following Council discussion at today's meeting and provide direction on the next steps to implement the recommendations identified in the report.

Today's Meeting

At today's meeting, staff will discuss the Draft Report (**Attachment 1**), starting with key accomplishments over the last six years. Staff will also highlight the general and specific findings and recommendations summarized above and described in the report. These findings and recommendations were previously presented, discussed, and confirmed by councilmembers at the Council meeting in May. However, the Draft Report provides additional detail on each of the specific findings and recommendations based on input received from the Council at that meeting, and from the discussion at the March Council retreat. Staff will also review the four key planning topics, and the emerging issues summarized above and described in the report. Staff will ask the Council to offer input regarding the relative priority of these issues to help inform the order in which the topics

are addressed. These priorities will then inform the Council's 2020 Work Plan and future activities.

Some questions councilmembers may want to consider when reviewing the report include:

1. Is the Draft Report complete? Is there anything missing that you would like to see included?
2. Do you concur with the general and specific findings of the report?
3. Do the specific recommendations accurately reflect your priorities and where the Council should focus its efforts in the next five years?
4. Which of the four key planning issues, topics, and emerging issues do you feel are most important to address?

Next Steps

Staff will incorporate councilmember input from today's meeting to complete Chapter 5 and prepare a Final Report. Staff anticipates returning to the Council in the fourth quarter of 2019 to seek Council approval of the report.

Fiscal Information

Not applicable.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1: Draft Five-Year Review Report

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