



**DRAFT**

**SUMMARY JUNE 27, 2024  
DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEETING**

For review and adoption by the Council at the July 25, 2024, meeting.

All meeting materials, presentations, and comment letters are available at  
<https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/council-meetings>

**MEETING SUMMARY**

---

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Julie Lee called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM on June 27, 2024, at the California Natural Resources Building at 715 P Street, Room 221, Sacramento, CA 95814.

**2. ROLL CALL – ESTABLISH A QUORUM (WATER CODE §85210.5)**

Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established. The following councilmembers were present and in person: Burgis, Damrell, Hueso, Mehranian, and Lee.

The following councilmembers were present and remote: Miller and Zingale.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

**4. CONSENT CALENDAR (ACTION ITEM)**

**a. Adoption of May 23, 2024, Meeting Summary**

Chair Lee presented the agenda item for adopting the consent calendar.

There was no public comment.

**Motion** (approve the consent calendar): offered by Councilmember Mehranian, seconded by Councilmember Burgis.

**Vote:** 7/0 - The motion was adopted (Burgis: Aye, Damrell: Aye, Hueso: Aye, Mehranian: Aye, Miller: Aye, Zingale: Aye, Lee: Aye)

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3Sdffqc>, minute 00:02:47.

## **5. CHAIR'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)**

Chair Lee highlighted the Delta Research Award Seminar series that the Delta Science Program is hosting and provided a brief description of the series. Chair Lee shared that there are legislative meet-and-greets planned, and that she will have more information to share in July. Chair Lee closed by sharing about her most recent summer vacation.

Councilmember Burgis highlighted that the City of Oakley is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being a city.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3Sdffqc>, minute 00:03:47.

## **6. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)**

Executive Officer Jessica Pearson shared information about the upcoming Science for Communities workshop, including the goals and logistics of the workshop. Pearson announced no covered actions have been filed since the last Council Meeting. Pearson highlighted a comment letter Council staff submitted on June 6 to the El Dorado Irrigation District regarding their California Environmental Quality Act

(CEQA) Initial Study and Negative Declaration for a Five-Year Conserved Water Transfer.

Pearson closed by highlighting the Outreach Highlights Report and Active Projects List included in the Councilmember packets and online.

**a. Legal Update**

There was no legal update.

**c. Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy and Delta Protection Commission Update**

Bruce Blodgett, Executive Director of the Delta Protection Commission (DPC), began with an update on the National Heritage Area and highlighted an upcoming Delta Heritage Forum on Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, at the Antioch Historical Museum. Blodgett provided an update on a grant to extend and create a Clarksburg branch line trail in partnership with West Sacramento, Yolo County, and the Yolo Transportation District. Blodgett reviewed some land use items the DPC has provided input on, including the Contra Costa County General Plan Update, and a green waste facility proposed for Twin Cities Road.

Campbell Ingram, Executive Officer for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (Delta Conservancy), began with an update on funding sources for the Delta Conservancy, including an opportunity to take over the Clean Vessels Program in the Delta. Ingram provided an update on the Delta Drought Response Pilot program, including takeaways from the forthcoming report.

Vice-Chair Miller congratulated Ingram and his team on their work.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3Sdffqc>, minute 00:07:02.

**7. LEAD SCIENTIST REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)**

Deputy Executive Office for Science, Henry DeBey, presented the Lead Scientist Report this month, beginning with the monthly article highlight.

*James T. Peterson, Erin McCreless, Adam Duarte, Patti Wohner, Scott Hamilton, Josue Medellín-Azuara, Alvar Escriva-Bou. Prototyping structured decision making for water resource management in the San Francisco Bay-Delta. 2024. Environmental Science & Policy. Volume 157. 103775. ISSN 1462-9011. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2024.103775>.*

The article "Prototyping Structured Decision Making for Water Resource Management in the San Francisco Bay-Delta" by Peterson et al. (2024) explores implementing a structured decision-making (SDM) process to address complex water resource issues in the Bay-Delta. SDM is a method that simplifies complex decisions in natural resource management by breaking them down into manageable components to evaluate their effectiveness and potential trade-offs. This approach can provide continuity in decision-making, ensuring that the process remains consistent despite changes in personnel. Maintaining a stable framework for evaluating decisions helps prevent negative management outcomes that could affect both ecological and human elements. Creating a full SDM is a comprehensive, detailed process that includes six key steps, as well as extensive data collection, deep engagement from a broad group of collaborators, and significant financial and personnel investment. To save money and time while still conducting a thorough assessment, the group created a "prototype" SDM, which allowed for quicker evaluations and adjustments. The prototype SDM team included experts in hydrologic modeling, biology, and agriculture, as well as representatives from local, state, and federal agencies, non-profits, and recreational fishers. The working group identified four fundamental objectives: maximizing Delta Smelt persistence and abundance, maximizing juvenile Chinook Salmon, minimizing losses to California's water availability and reliability, and minimizing losses to agricultural revenue. They proposed 14 candidate management actions to achieve these objectives and used existing models to evaluate trade-offs and benefits. The process highlighted the importance of having a diverse group of participating interests and the need for active engagement from all relevant disciplines to avoid misunderstandings and ensure comprehensive evaluations. The authors concluded that a full SDM process would benefit natural resource management in the Bay-Delta by linking research, monitoring, and decision-making more effectively. They emphasized that ongoing efforts should integrate new information into quantitative models to continually

refine management strategies. This approach can help improve decision-making in the Delta by reducing conflicts, improving transparency, and ensuring that decisions are rooted in best available science.

DeBey and Councilmember Zingale discussed the agricultural revenue component of the SDM.

DeBey highlighted recent Delta Science program activities:

- Early Career Leadership Workshop for the 2022 Class of Delta Science Fellows, co-hosted by the Delta Science Program and California Sea Grant. The Early Career Leadership Workshop helps to put this research in the context of management challenges, provides training in communicating science, and provides advice on how to build a successful science career. DeBey highlighted the selection process for next year's fellows is already underway.
- The Suisun Adaptive Management Advisory Team (AMAT), which is convened by the Delta Science Program's Adaptive Management Unit to support implementation of adaptive management requirements under the Suisun Marsh Plan and Delta Plan, gathered in person on May 14th for their quarterly meeting, bringing together practitioners of adaptive management to learn about and discuss projects in the Suisun Marsh.
- On June 10-12, 2024, Delta Science Program staff participated in the Chesapeake Community Research Symposium in Annapolis, Maryland. The theme of the symposium was Managing Water Quality for Living Resources in a Changing Climate. Ben Geske, a Senior Engineer in the Delta Science Program, was invited to be a guest panel speaker for a session focused on Coupled Human and Natural Systems (CHANS).

DeBey next highlighted upcoming Science Program activities:

- Nominations are now open for the Brown-Nichols Science Award. This award recognizes the contributions of a scientist for significant research and active involvement in facilitating the use of science to manage the San Francisco Estuary and watershed. The deadline for these awards has been extended to July 15.

- The Delta Science Program is hosting a weekly, virtual seminar series to feature outcomes from the 2020-2021 Delta Research Awards, all seminars will be recorded and posted on the Council's YouTube site:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@DeltaCouncil/>.

DeBey closed with a review of the By the Numbers report.

Councilmember Burgis and DeBey discussed the average river flow on the By the Numbers report. Chair Lee and DeBey discussed the format of the water storage capacity on the graphic.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3Sdffqc>, minute 00:21:25.

## **8. INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW (INFORMATION ITEM)**

DeBey introduced the Council staff on the panel: Environmental Program Manager Rachael Klopfenstein, Environmental Scientist Aaron Angel, and Senior Environmental Scientist Tricia Lee.

Klopfenstein introduced the panel: Andrew Schwarz with the California Department of Water Resources and Randi Field, with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR). Klopfenstein provided background information on the Independent Scientific Peer Review process, the history of the program, the structure and content of the review and advice panels, and an overview of the review process.

Klopfenstein introduced a recent peer review conducted for DWR on the Delivery Capability Report (DCR) for the State Water Project, including the goals of the review and the process of the review of this document. Schwarz provided further information on the DCR and the purpose and importance of the document. Schwarz outlined the outcomes of the review process, and the benefits of going through the peer review process.

Angel introduced a recently completed peer review conducted for USBR on the Fish and Aquatic Effects Analysis for the Coordinated Long-Term Operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, including the background of the document and National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process, the goals of the review, and key findings from the review. Lee provided an overview of an additional review conducted for USBR on the Water Temperature Modeling Platform, including background on the platform, the goals of the review, and the key findings from the review process. Field with USBR reviewed how USBR will use the information provided in the reviews and USBR's continued use of the peer review services.

Angel provided an overview of a recently completed review for DWR on the Summer Fall-Habitat Action including the goals of the review, and the makeup of the panel. Klopfenstein concluded the panel with a review of continued work with existing partners, and areas of growth for the program.

Chair Lee expressed enthusiasm for the information shared and the importance of this work. Councilmember Mehranian and Klopfenstein discussed the process for selecting peer reviewers. Councilmember Mehranian and Schwarz discussed the criteria reviewed in the DCR. Councilmember Zingale expressed appreciation for the panel and the work of the Peer Review unit. Chair Lee and Klopfenstein discussed the requirements of peer review and when and why agencies request review. Councilmember Burgis, Klopfenstein, and Schwarz discussed the motivation of agencies requesting review. Councilmember Burgis and Klopfenstein discussed how the scope of reviews and how they are created, who funds the reviews, and other agencies who provide peer review services. Chair Lee and Klopfenstein clarified that this program is separate from the Delta Independent Science Board. Councilmember Burgis and Klopfenstein discussed how expertise is chosen for each review. Councilmember Hueso and Klopfenstein discussed the transparency of the peer review process, and how results from the reviews are used in decision-making, and the study of PFAS in the Delta.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3Sdffqc>, minute 00:39:35.

## **9. CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES (DWR) (INFORMATION ITEM)**

Carrie Buckman, environmental program manager with DWR, and Graham Bradner, executive director of the Delta Conveyance Project Design and Construction Authority, presented updates on the Delta Conveyance Project (DCP). Buckman began with an update on a recent court ruling concerning geotechnical work for the DCP. Buckman provided a summary of potential usage of the DCP if it had been operational this year. Bradner presented the findings of the Cost Estimate Report, including an overview of the Bethany Reservoir Alignment, the methodology used to create the cost estimate, the project timeline, and the 2023 cost estimate. Bradner next reviewed the previous cost estimate with this most recent estimate, and an overview of innovations taken into consideration by the project team to reduce cost, improve schedule, and reduce risks.

Buckman reviewed the Benefit Cost Estimate report. Buckman began with an overview of the State Water Project, a high-level review of DCP benefits, project costs, and the benefit-cost ratio. Buckman provided a more detailed review of the DCP benefits, a review of the Benefit-Cost Ratio across multiple climate scenarios, a comparison of the cost of DCP to other alternative water supplies, and a summary of the costs if the DCP is not constructed. Buckman closed with an update on other permitting activities of the project.

Chair Lee and Bradner discussed the 2020 cost estimate and the construction of some of the proposed innovations. Councilmember Zingale, Buckman, and Chief Counsel Aguilar discussed the recent court decision and DWR and Council Staff coordination. Councilmember Mehranian and Brander discussed project innovations. Councilmember Burgis, Buckman, and Bradner discussed who will fund the project, the absence of Federal partners, the timeline of existing funds for the project, and outside analysis of the budget. Councilmember Burgis and Buckman discussed the value of homes and property tax affected by the DCP, potentially overlooked costs in the estimate, the water project to be supplied by the DCP, the maintenance of existing water supply infrastructure, the methodology for measuring seismic risk, investment in the levy system, and water storage in Central and Southern California.



*Public Comment*

*Osha Meserve, on behalf of local agencies in the North Delta, commented on the agenda item description, the missing analysis of the water supply in the estimates, the sea level rise date used for the estimates, investments, and updates for existing infrastructure in the system, and the early consultation process.*

*Cintia Cortez, policy analyst with Restore the Delta, informed the Council of a report recently published by Dr. Jeffrey Michael, director of Public Policy Programs at the University of Pacific, that analyzes the financial feasibility of the DCP.*

Councilmember Burgis expressed interest in learning more from Dr. Jeffrey Michael.

Vice-Chair Miller, Councilmember Damrell, and Councilmember Hueso left the meeting during this agenda item.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3Sdffqc>, minute 01:34:03.

## **6. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

### **b. Legislative Update (Action Item)**

Legislative and Policy Advisor, Brandon Chapin gave an overview of AB 174, outlining a new California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption.

Councilmember Burgis and Chapin discussed the scope of AB 174.

Chapin provided an overview of AB 1924, SB 366, the 2024 budget deal, and the possibility of a climate bond. Chapin provided an update on federal bill H.R. 7719 Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Removal Act of 2024.

Councilmember Burgis and Chapin discussed the federal funds appropriated for vessel removal and the challenges surrounding abandoned vessel removal.

Ruby Kaill, an SF McCarthy Fellow with the Council, provided an overview of federal bill H.R. 8308 the Nutria Eradication and Control Reauthorization Act of 2024.

Councilmember Burgis highlighted the importance of the prevention of invasive species.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3Sdffqc>, minute 02:28:09.

**10. PREPARATION FOR NEXT COUNCIL MEETING**

The next Council meeting will take place on July 25. Please refer to the posted meeting notice 10 days before the meeting for further information or updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:21 p.m.

*All meeting materials, presentations, and comment letters are available at <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/council-meetings>.*