



ACTION ITEM

Consideration and Potential Adoption of the Delta Adapts Adaptation Plan

Summary

This item is an overview of the Delta Adapts Adaptation Plan (Adaptation Plan). The Adaptation Plan proposes climate adaptation strategies for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh (Delta), recommends implementation agencies and partners, discusses tradeoffs in Delta adaptation, and presents several case studies that exemplify the recommended adaptation actions. Council staff presented a public review draft of the Adaptation Plan to the Council in November 2024 during the public review period.

At today's meeting, Council staff will present the Adaptation Plan, summarizing changes made in response to tribal consultations and public comment. Staff recommends the Council adopt a resolution approving the Adaptation Plan.

Requested Action

Council staff requests that the Council adopt Resolution 2025-08 to approve the Adaptation Plan, *Delta Adapts: Creating a Climate Resilient Future*.

Background

Delta Adapts provides a framework to guide the Council and other state agencies, federal and local agencies; non-governmental organizations and tribes in the Delta to address the region's climate adaptation needs. It is the first comprehensive, regional approach to climate resiliency for the Delta that commits to collaboration across federal, state, local and regional levels. Delta Adapts consists of two phases: 1) a **Vulnerability Assessment** (VA) to improve understanding of regional vulnerabilities due to climate change to protect the vital resources that the Delta provides to California and beyond, with a focus on state interests and investments, followed by 2) an **Adaptation Plan** detailing strategies and actions to adapt and

respond to those vulnerabilities. The VA was previously approved by the Council on June 24, 2021.

The [Delta Adapts staff report for the November 21, 2024, Council meeting](https://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/council-meeting/meeting-materials/2024-11-21-item-12-delta-adapts-draft-adaptation-plan-update.pdf) (<https://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/council-meeting/meeting-materials/2024-11-21-item-12-delta-adapts-draft-adaptation-plan-update.pdf>) provides extensive background on the Delta Adapts initiative, including the outreach process, a summary of proposed adaptation strategies, equity and governance considerations and the potential costs of adapting to climate change in the Delta. Please refer to that staff report for additional background. The remainder of this report focuses on activities since November 2024 that have led to the completion of the final draft Adaptation Plan.

Tribal Consultation and Public Review

The public review draft Adaptation Plan was released on November 18, 2024, which opened a tribal consultation period and a 60-day public review period, with the public review period subsequently extended for an additional 30 days. During this time, Council staff consulted with three tribes and received 32 public comments. This includes comments raised during Council staff presentations and tabling at community events (comments from 20 presentations), comments from Councilmembers and members of the public at the March 2024 and November 2024 Council meetings, and comments from a January 2025 drop-in event (six comments).

Changes Since the Public Review Draft

Staff made changes to the draft plan to be consistent with other Council initiatives, new research findings, partner organizations' documents and other sources.

In response to public comments, both clarifying edits and substantive changes were made, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

- Referring to climate change impacts in the present, not just the future.
- Adding additional detail regarding other state plans and initiatives the Adaptation Plan supports or aligns with.
- Making additional connections between the VA and proposed strategies.

- Clarifying how outreach informed the proposed strategy and action language.
- Adding emphasis to the need for sustained support for levees.
- Clarifying that not all wetland restoration projects will sequester carbon and adjusting language so as not to overemphasize carbon sequestration benefits.
- Adjusting language concerning subsidence reversal and flood risk.
- Adding minor details about ideas for next steps following the adoption of the plan.
- Identifying 30 adaptation accelerator actions that should be addressed first in implementation because they need to happen soon for subsequent actions to be possible, they already have widespread support and recognition in other plans or existing initiatives and they are based on established science.

Attachment 2 provides a section-by-section summary of changes.

Transitioning to Implementation

There was considerable interest in continued collaboration as the Council transitions to implementation and coordination of specific actions, timelines and responsibilities. For instance, Council staff received many comments regarding the importance of Delta levees and the need for consistent funding for levee maintenance and improvements, as also outlined in the Delta Levees Investment Strategy, in addition to multi-benefit projects. Several commenters asked for a more nuanced prioritization of actions, such as focusing on initial actions with high potential for building capacity for future actions, noting the benefits of sequencing the actions over time and focusing efforts where there is accepted science and deeper understanding of approaches that can mitigate climate impacts. In response, Council staff developed a list of proposed adaptation accelerator actions.

Public comments also included suggestions to keep in mind when implementing the Adaptation Plan, including developing a Delta-specific levee standard, improving levee operations and maintenance transparency through a public dashboard, working with experts on improving communication around innovative

financing options for long-term flood recovery, developing a funding strategy and a new governance framework and addressing dynamic climate conditions.

Council staff's efforts to implement the Adaptation Plan will be coordinated by the Climate Change and Environmental Justice unit within the Planning and Performance Division. Successful implementation of the adaptation strategies will require coordination among many federal, state and local agencies, non-governmental organizations and tribes. Going forward, staff will keep the Council apprised of the Plan's implementation progress.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Today, Council staff is recommending that the Council approve Resolution 2025-08, which would:

- 1) Approve the Delta Adapts Adaptation Plan as presented today.
- 2) Direct the Executive Officer to return to the Council to approve the implementation of any recommendations and actions that are consistent with, contemplated by, or recommended in the Delta Adapts Adaptation Plan.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1: Adaptation Plan

Attachment 2: Summary of changes from public review draft to final

Attachment 3: Adaptation Plan Executive Summary – Spanish Language Version

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