

Restore the Delta

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www.restorethedelta.org



December 12, 2025

Delta Stewardship Council Board Members

715 P Street, 15-300

Sacramento, California 95814

Sent via email: disb@deltacouncil.ca.gov

Re: Feedback on Delta Stewardship Council Public Engagement

Dear Chair Werner and Board Members,

Restore the Delta is a 501c3. Restore the Delta works in the areas of public education, research, program and policy development, and outreach so that all Californians recognize the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta as part of California's natural heritage, deserving of restoration. We interface with local, state and federal agencies to advance this vision.

We are coalition builders, climate and water policy experts, farmers, researchers, and San Joaquin Delta residents tackling deep systemic challenges in our community. For the past 19 years, we've partnered with Delta tribes, farmers, and disadvantaged communities to chart a sustainable economic future for the Delta. We envision a Delta region with fishable, swimmable, farmable, and drinkable waters; regenerative agriculture practices honoring family farms; restoration rooted in traditional ecological knowledge in partnership with tribes; and abundant community wealth building opportunities. Our work finds us in government planning spaces advocating for water quality, flood and drought protections; out on Delta waterways monitoring water quality and hazardous algal blooms; developing strategies with farmers and landowners to reverse island subsidence; and assessing new energy and carbon management technologies being proposed in the region for environmental protections and community benefit.

We are writing to share feedback on the public engagement process at the Independent Science Board meeting, which occurred on December 5, 2025. While we greatly appreciate the important work that the Delta Stewardship Council does, as well as the importance of the Independent Science Board, we respectfully request the board to consider our feedback and recommendations on public engagement practices to ensure engagement is meaningful and properly done.

To begin, although the meeting was agendized to start at 9:00am, the meeting did not convene until nearly 9:20am without any verbal or written notification of the delay. This substantial delay without notice led to confusion for some attendees. While we understand unexpected delays may occur, informing attendees in a timely manner ensures the public is able to continue to engage in DSC meetings.

Our main concern we would like to highlight is the current process for public comments during DSC meetings. Public comment, enshrined under the Bagley-Keen Act (Gov. Code, § 11125.7, subd. (a)), is fundamental to transparent and public processes. As a public agency, the Delta Stewardship Council holds an obligation to allow the public the opportunity to provide comments on each agendized item. We appreciate that public comment was called for at the beginning of the meeting per the instructions provided in the meeting notice, however there was no additional opportunity or consideration for potential technical difficulties or confusion.

On December 3rd, Restore the Delta employee, Spencer Fern, registered to provide public comment on agenda item 6: Update on Implementing the Cyanobacteria Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring Strategy for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (see attachment A). Registration for public comment was included as part of the Zoom registration, however we understand additional instructions for public comment were also included in the November 24, 2025 agenda and meeting notice¹. Public comment was called for at the start of the meeting, as well intermittently throughout the meeting, however Mr. Fern's name was never called nor was there an opportunity during the meeting to indicate an interest in providing public comment virtually. Public comment was also rushed prior to the lunch break and following agenda item 6, leaving little room for Mr. Fern to troubleshoot how to best indicate his interest in providing public comment. It is unclear whether DSC reviews public comments registered through Zoom, or whether the DSC requires direct email contact for public comment purposes. We would encourage the DSC to consider clarifying the preferred public comment registration process, and if Zoom registration is not actively monitored, this option should be removed. We also recommend DSC consider how public comment is conducted at other state agencies, with clear stated instructions on how to provide public comment, who to reach out to for technical difficulties, and adequate time to resolve these difficulties and ensure interested parties can participate.

We do not seek to submit additional comments at this time, but instead write to ensure proper public participation for future DSC meetings. Understanding that the DSC covers many important issues across the Delta, it is critical that the public have the opportunity to engage directly on issues that may impact them. We thank you for considering our concerns and recommendations.

Sincerely,



Morgen Snyder
Director of Policy & Programs

Restore the Delta



Spencer Fern
Delta Science Program Manager

Restore the Delta

¹ Delta Stewardship Independent Science Board, *Dec. 8, 2025 Meeting Notice* (Nov. 24, 2024).
<https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/ispb/meeting-notice/2025-11-24-isb-meeting-notice.pdf>

Attachment A



Fwd: Reminder: Delta Stewardship Council Independent Science Board starts in 1 hour

From Spencer Fern <spencer@restorethedelta.org>

Date Mon 12/8/2025 11:00 AM

To Morgen Snyder <morgen@restorethedelta.org>

Best regards,

Spencer Fern

Delta Science Program Manager

Restore the Delta

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pronouns: *He/Him/His*



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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Zoom** <no-reply@zoom.us>

Date: Fri, Dec 5, 2025, 7:56AM

Subject: Reminder: Delta Stewardship Council Independent Science Board starts in 1 hour

To: <spencer@restoredelta.org>

Hi Spencer Fern,

This is a reminder that your webinar will begin in 1 hour:

You can cancel your registration at any time.

Thank you!

Delta Stewardship Council Independent Science Board

Date & Time: Dec 5, 2025 09:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Webinar ID: 837 0978 5940

Description: DISB Meeting

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