

April 12, 2013

Dear Legislators:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the “Portfolio-Based Conceptual Alternative,” and your request that it be studied as part of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) process. I am grateful for your engagement in this issue, and support your call to examine potential water conveyance fixes and wetland restoration in the context of other important improvements to water supply reliability and flood protection.

In the process of developing a project, we are committed to a number of goals. First and foremost, the legislatively-mandated co-equal goals to restore the ecosystem of the Delta and determine what water can be exported in a way that’s environmentally sustainable and reliable in the face of an extreme event or disaster made more likely by climate change. Some of you were present during that legislative process and supported these goals, so I know how important they are to you. Any potential alternative, as a minimum threshold, will have to satisfy these two goals.

Additionally, we have as general goals – some of which are also included in the Portfolio-Based Conceptual Alternative – further advancement in water conservation and recycling, as important components of an Integrated Water Management approach that over time will lead to less reliance on the Delta, and minimize the use of the south Delta pumps, which constrain the ability to restore Delta fisheries. As evidence of our commitment, last week the Department of Water Resources hosted California’s first Integrated Water Management Summit and convened top water officials to address how to effectively manage limited water resources given future uncertainties.

We have released draft chapters of the BDCP in recent weeks, and will continue to do so until the entire draft is available by next month. Additionally, we are preparing to release the administrative draft environmental documents so that the public can begin to examine, at this early stage, important environmental aspects of the state’s proposal and various alternatives to it.

The draft BDCP is significant. For the first time, and as a direct result of the dual, co-equal goals given to us by the Legislature, water deliveries will be determined by biological objectives. The water project will meet the stringent requirements of the Endangered Species Act and Natural Community Conservation Planning Act. State and federal agencies have been working together to get to a project that can be permitted within these laws.

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The alternative of a 3,000 cubic feet per second Delta conveyance – which the Portfolio-Based Conceptual Alternative calls for – will be studied in this process. As with all 15 alternatives that we are studying in this EIR process, it will be evaluated against the co-equal goals, as well as other goals including reliability in the face of an extreme event.

Since this administration took office, we have taken numerous steps to do this water planning in a transparent way. All parties receive documents related to this process at the same time, and they are made public. You can follow the chapters and draft EIR by going to the link <http://baydeltaconservationplan.com/Home.aspx>. Future releases will be available from this same location.

I look forward to your continued involvement in the effort to restore the Delta ecosystem and provide a reliable water supply for California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Laird". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Laird
Secretary for Natural Resources

Identical Letter Sent To:

Lois Wolk, Senator, 3rd District

Mark DeSaulnier, Senator, 7th District

William Monning, Senator, 17th District

Jim Beall, Senator, 15th District

Cathleen Galgiani, Senator, 5th District

Fran Pavley, Senator, 27th District

Susan Bonilla, Assemblymember, 14th District

Ellen Corbett, Senator, 10th District

Roger Dickinson, Assemblymember, 7th District

Susan Talamantes Eggman, Assemblymember, 13th District

Mark Leno, Senator, 11th District

Hannah-Beth Jackson, Senator, 19th District

Jerry Hill, Senator, 13th District

Mariko Yamada, Assemblymember, 4th District

Joan Buchanan, Assemblymember, 16th District

Marty Block, Senator, 39th District

Richard Pan, M.D., Assemblymember, 9th District

Tom Ammiano, Assemblymember, 17th District

Wesley Chesbro, Assemblymember, 2nd District

Ken Cooley, Assemblymember, 8th District

Toni Atkins, Assemblymember, 78th District

Paul Fong, Assemblymember, 28th District