March 31, 2009

Ms. Dolores Brown, Chief,
Office of Environmental Compliance
Department of Water Resources

Dear Ms. Brown:

During my study of BDCP materials over a period of many months, I have noticed the repeated use of the phrase "around the Delta" when referring to the proposed new North Delta diversion and its associated conveyance facilities. While it is true that the water the new facility carries will not be running through the Delta channels as happens at present, it is definitely not true that the new conveyance will run "around the Delta" as stated in many of your public documents and as often appears in print media and other public pronouncements. A few examples from your literature follow:

- BDCP Facts About Conveyance (8/25/08) back of page: "new point(s) of diversion in the northern Delta with isolated conveyance around the Delta." (italics mine)
- BDCP: An Overview and Update (March 2009) page 3: Improvements to water operation and flow: "Constructing and operating new points of diversion in the northern Delta reach of the Sacramento River with isolated conveyance around the Delta to the existing south Delta State Water Project and Central Valley Project facilities." and page 11: "The Steering Committee agreed that the most promising approach...would be to develop and analyze more environmentally friendly ways to move water through and/or around the Delta, and then to develop corresponding conservation strategies." (italics mine)
- The Bay Delta Conservation Plan: Points of Agreement for Continuing into the Planning Process (November 16, 2007) page 3: 2.3 Conveyance Facilities: "The main new physical feature of this conveyance system includes the construction and operation of a new point (or points) of diversion in the north Delta on the Sacramento River and an isolated conveyance facility around the Delta." (italics mine)

In fact, a cursory examination of your maps shows that the new canal, along with its considerable infrastructure (pipelines, transmission lines, pumps, bridges, tunnels, roads, etc.), runs directly through the Statutory Delta, the longer portions actually running through the Primary Zone, an area that under almost every other circumstance has been declared effectively off-limits to most types of development. In view of the wide-spread agreement about the fragility and environmental degradation of the Delta, this is as it should be.
However, your printed materials contribute to a misapprehension about this proposed project that is widely held among members of the general public, and very likely most of our lawmakers as well, namely, that it leaves the Delta intact because it carries the water around it to the pumps. Those of us who call the Delta home know that it will have huge impacts on the physical integrity, economic viability, and ecological health of the Delta, entirely aside from considerations of the effects of water diversion from the north. It shreds the landscape from north to south, introduces huge urban-scale facilities into a rural setting, and slices and dices fragile waterways, levees, farmland, and habitat areas alike. None of this will be apparent to anyone who hears that this canal will go "around the Delta". I call on the BDCP Steering Committee and everyone associated with this Plan to stop using this description of the "isolated conveyance" and to instead begin to give a true verbal picture to all of where this canal will actually be located. As an alternative, move as much as possible of the route of the conveyance to a location outside of the Primary Delta so as to minimize the massive detrimental impacts a through-Delta route cannot help but have.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mary McTaggart
34840 South River Road
Clarksburg, CA 95612
cavelanding@yahoo.com