

## California Department of Water Resources

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### **Gov. Brown's Delta Water Plan Refined to Reduce Local Impacts**

*Need for Three Pumping Plants Eliminated; Public Invited to Comment on Changes*

SACRAMENTO – The administration of Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. and its federal partners announced Friday several significant changes to the water conveyance portion of the proposed Bay Delta Conservation Plan, including elimination of the need to build three pumping plants along the Sacramento River near Hood.

The changes were pursued over the past year in an effort to respond to the concerns of Delta landowners and others. The changes, subject to further refinement, will be incorporated into the draft plan and Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement that were available for formal public comment until July 29. The changes will be recirculated for additional public comment in 2015. The changes announced today would:

- Eliminate three pumping plants on the east bank of the Sacramento River between Hood and Walnut Grove.
- Minimize activity on Staten Island, which provides important sandhill crane habitat, by removing tunnel launch facilities, large reusable tunnel material storage areas, a barge landing site, and high-voltage power lines.
- Increase use of property owned by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR).
- Eliminate the need for additional permanent power lines to the intake locations in the north Delta, including near Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge.
- Eliminate impacts on Italian Slough (near Clifton Court Forebay) by removing an underground siphon.
- Reduce power requirements.
- Allow water to flow from the Sacramento River entirely by gravity at certain river stages.
- Reduce tunnel operation and maintenance costs.

The changes would eliminate the need to build three separate two-story pumping plants along a five-mile stretch between Clarksburg and Courtland. The original plans to build three intakes

screened for fish protection along that stretch of river would not change, but after extensive engineering analysis, DWR has determined that it is not necessary to also build pumping plants adjacent to each intake in order to move the water from the river and into tunnels. Instead, water could be moved from the river into tunnels by a single new pumping plant constructed 40 miles away, at the end of the tunnels on DWR property near Clifton Court Forebay.

The roughly 87-acre footprint of each intake would not change, but three 46,000-square-foot buildings would not be needed to house pumping plants. No permanent transmission lines, substations, and surge shafts would be needed, either. Facilities at the intakes would include fish screens in the river, sedimentation basins, drying lagoons, access roads, and control gate structures.

Elimination of the three pumping plants would help preserve the view on State Route 160 between Hood and Walnut Grove, a state scenic highway. It would also reduce construction traffic along the river.

Throughout the eight-year development of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, DWR has sought to minimize potential disruption and dislocation of Delta residents. In 2013, DWR made significant changes to the proposed water conveyance facilities that reduced by 50 percent the total permanent footprint of the project.

Fact sheets and visual simulations of the proposed changes to the northern intakes and Clifton Court Forebay are available at <http://baydeltaconservationplan.com>.

The most recent changes to the proposed conveyance system, along with many other changes to other aspects of the plan, will be available for formal public review and comment in a partially Recirculated Draft BDCP, Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement and Implementing Agreement, expected for release in 2015.

The types of revisions expected in the partially recirculated documents include changes to the Plan and Implementing Agreement, substantial new and updated analysis, and changes to impact conclusions and mitigation measures. The following topic areas are expected to include revisions, modifications, or additional explanatory text in recirculated documents:

- Project description
- Alternatives comparison
- Water quality
- Air quality and health risk assessment
- Traffic and noise
- Aquatic species
- Cumulative impacts
- Environmental commitments
- Geotechnical investigations

- Habitat restoration assumptions
- Modeling interpretation
- Assurances and funding

The Bay Delta Conservation Plan aims to both stabilize water deliveries from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and contribute to the recovery of 56 species of plants, fish and wildlife over the 50-year life of the plan. The Legislature delineated those co-equal goals in the 2009 Delta Reform Act. Water from the Delta reaches approximately 25 million Californians and three million acres of irrigated farmland.

The plan aims to both reverse the ecological decline of the region but also modernize a water system that now depends on hundreds of miles of earthen levees vulnerable to earthquake, flood, and rising sea levels. One of the conservation measures in the plan involves building new points of diversion in the north Delta, in order to minimize the use of the existing south Delta diversion. The existing diversion, constructed 45 years ago, sits on a dead-end channel that cannot be effectively screened for fish. New diversions could be screened with modern technology and would allow for more natural east-west flow through the Delta to San Francisco Bay.

DWR and other state and federal agencies are currently reviewing the comments received through the public review period that ended on July 29, 2014. Proposed changes to the BDCP are in response to many of the comments and concerns gathered through the recent comment period.

All significant environmental issues raised in comments received during the public review period of the Draft EIR/EIS, as well in comments received during the public review period for the recirculated DEIR/EIS, will be addressed in a final EIR/EIS tentatively scheduled for release in late 2015. Certification of final documents would allow project proponents to begin seeking the many permits necessary to implement the comprehensive plan.

The Bay Delta Conservation Plan has been developed through eight years of analysis and hundreds of public meetings. It is a habitat conservation plan under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and a natural community conservation plan under California law. It describes conservation measures that would be undertaken by the California Department of Water Resources, operator of the State Water Project, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, operator of the Central Valley Project. The plan would provide a stable regulatory environment for operation of the water projects, which in recent years have been forced to curtail Delta pumping under rules to protect certain threatened and endangered fish species.

Water users served by the SWP and CVP – primarily in Southern California, the Santa Clara Valley, and the San Joaquin Valley – would pay most costs under the plan, including the entire \$16 billion cost associated with new intakes and tunnels.

To read the public review draft Bay Delta Conservation Plan and associated environmental documents, please visit <http://baydeltaconservationplan.com>.

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