As a fourth generation west Delta resident and farmer; I am aware that the islands of the west Delta including Sherman, Twitchell, Brannan-Andrus, Grand, and Ryer have historically contained the some of the most productive and profitable croplands in California due to the unique combination of fertile peat soil and an abundant and easily accessible water supply from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers.

It has been documented that the first large-scale farming operations in California were developed in the west Delta, due to the bountiful harvests that could be reaped from the fertile peat soil. These profitable west Delta farms were developed prior to development of the farms that are served by the Mendota Canal and California aqueducts in the San Joaquin Valley and southern California.

The BDCP and EIR should address the significance of croplands in the Delta, in particular the peat islands of the west Delta, which have contributed significantly to the State’s corn, asparagus, tomato, alfalfa, and pear economies since the 1800s and are a valuable resource contributing to the $3 billion worth of crops produced annually in the Delta.

The EIR should provide an evaluation of historic water quality, agriculture production, and fish populations in the west Delta, prior to construction of the cross-channel and increases in State/Federal water project exports. Enforcement of the established delta outflow standards is critical to sustain the historically beneficial irrigation supply that has been documented by past generations of farmers in the west Delta.
Thank you for your comments.

Ms. Delores Brown
Chief, Office of Environmental Compliance
Department of Water Resources
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236