



### **Delta Counties Coalition**

Contra Costa County · Sacramento County · San Joaquin County · Solano County · Yolo County

*"Working together on water and Delta issues"*

### **"Twin Tunnels Prevent State from Genuine Water Solutions"**

This winter and spring may forever be known – like many fishermen would say – as “the one that got away.” Over the past two months, California has experienced a series of severe storms, which caused numerous cities and counties to declare states of emergency. Rather than having the necessary storage capacity in place to collect and store storm water runoff for future use, massive amounts of rainwater from our bountifully wet winter flowed down swollen creeks and rivers, through the Delta and out San Francisco Bay to the ocean. It’s water that we desperately need during drought conditions, like those we’ve experienced for much of the last decade.

And this spring we will watch it happen again as the Sierra snowpack melts.

Why the failure? State leaders have almost singularly focused on building giant tunnels in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to ship water southward while ignoring the bigger picture to address California’s ongoing and future water needs.

The state’s plan, known as the California WaterFix, has dominated the state’s water policy agenda at the expense of the Delta and other less fiscally and environmentally controversial water projects. As a result, the Delta will continue to deteriorate and there may never be a genuine water solution for California.

If the state continues to focus its political will on the WaterFix and its twin tunnels, it will continue to miss opportunities to be more effective and efficient managers of water. There are better, more cost-effective solutions that don’t pit Northern and Southern California against one another in the quest for reliable and high-quality water supplies. Local communities are already investing in storm water capture devices, low-impact development building standards, conservation measures, and groundwater recharge, but we need to more quickly implement these types of solutions on a larger scale in order for them to make a significant difference. Planning for drought may be difficult in wetter periods, but we must act.

Capturing a portion of the over 1 million gallons per second of water currently flowing out into the San Francisco Bay is also possible; however, additional above and below-ground storage is needed for this to occur. With warmer winters and snow melt often occurring earlier in the season, water supply from our snow pack is less reliable, which emphasizes the need to start making storage a priority.

The mission of the twin tunnels to move more water south is hopeless. The science is clear: exporting too much water from the Delta in dry years, which is the unspoken goal of the

California WaterFix, will cause irreversible impacts to the ecosystem, push protected fish species to the brink of extinction, and damage our region economically and environmentally.

Instead of the WaterFix, what if the state had focused its efforts on completing storage projects, levee improvements and better use of taxpayer-funded bond money to more swiftly construct essential statewide water projects?

We should have been better prepared for the storms. Now we need the state leadership and the legislature to rededicate themselves to sustainable options that the state and local communities can afford and implement in a reasonable time frame. It's imperative we take advantage of abundant rainfall and snowpack.

If state leaders continue to have tunnel vision, we'll continue to lose opportunities to move forward in a manner that benefits every Californian. It's past time to get serious about taking the necessary steps for what will hopefully be the next bountiful rain year. We can't "let 'em all get away."

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*The Delta Counties Coalition was formed to better represent nearly 4 million people throughout the Delta region and works collaboratively to give one voice to the Delta and engage in efforts to achieve three goals: improve the Delta ecosystem, provide a more reliable water supply for the state, and protect and enhance Delta communities.*

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