



North Delta CARES Action Committee

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July 9, 2018

NDC-2-50

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
Board of Directors
700 No. Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Office of the Board of Directors/rcaastro@mwdh2o.com

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Re: Board of Director's Meeting July 10, 2018, Agenda Item 8 – 6: Rescind the Board action taken on April 10, 2018 approving Board Item 8-7

We appreciate this opportunity to present some concerns we have about the California Water Fix as well as some possible alternative approaches to meeting the water needs of Southern Californians that we would like to have considered prior to the July 10 Board vote regarding potential funding of the California Water Fix. We believe these concerns are serious enough that they warrant a 60-day delay in the voting in order to have them adequately researched and considered prior to taking a final vote.

1. Gas Wells in the Construction Zone of the Tunnels' Alignment

There are many known gas wells and fields in the Delta Region as shown on the attached DWR-212, Figure 13-1. These gas fields and gas wells pose serious threats with the potential for major accidents and have been largely ignored, with minimal reference and mitigation measures in the California Water Fix.

This is a serious omission and/or oversight on the part of DWR. This absence of proper consideration puts MWD and the State Water Agency at extreme liability for gas well accidents and resulting potential financial hardship to their water districts and customers.

According to a 2010 review by outside engineering reviewers, DWR has neither designed nor constructed a project that passes through a gas field or near existing gas wells, either active or abandoned. Any mishap could cost MWD tens of millions of dollars of liability in resulting court cases in the event of one or more accidents involving gas wells or fields.

Unfortunately, gas well and tunneling accidents are not new to projects under construction by MWD. The largest tunneling accident in California history occurred in 1971 during MWD's boring of the 5.5 mile-long, 170 feet deep, underground Sylmar

Tunnel to Castaic Reservoir with a tunneling machine killing 17 people in a gassy tunnel explosion. The Sylmar Tunnel was known to go through an area of oil and gas wells. This was the longest trial in U.S. history and ultimately resulted in litigation amounting to \$9.3 million in civil judgments.

The only mitigation that DWR and MWD are proposing in the Conceptual Engineering Report is to determine in the future how close they can safely pass to gas wells during tunneling. This is unacceptable and extremely irresponsible in the light of the serious potential for an accident involving gas in tunneling operations.

2. New State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Staff Proposal

On Friday, July 6, 2018, SWRCB staff proposed sweeping changes in the allocation of California's water, leaving more water in Northern California's major rivers to help ailing fish populations and giving less to farming and human consumption. This could have a major impact on the amount of water that water users from Metropolitan Water District of Southern California may have access to in future years. This could also significantly impact the amount of water which would be available to divert through the California Water Fix tunnels, possibly making the current tunnel plans obsolete.

According to Dale Kasler with the Sacramento Bee newspaper, "The State Board said more water must be devoted to fish to prevent environmental disaster. Several major species of fish are nearing extinction, and increasing river flows will help them survive."

Per another Sacramento Bee article, SWRCB Chairwoman Felicia Marcus stated, "Fortunately, we have the ability to restore some balance to this system through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta Plan. But this plan is now more than 20 years old and must be modernized for today's conditions... The staff also released an update on the Sacramento/Delta part of the plan to help the Sacramento River and its tributaries and the Delta and its tributaries, including the Calaveras, Cosumnes and Mokelumne Rivers. Together, these plans detail the actions we must take to fix the problems in the Bay-Delta ecosystem." (["Here's How To Move Beyond the Water Wars and Save The Delta" by Felicia Marcus, Chairwoman – State Water Resources Control Board, July 6, 2018: https://www.sacbee.com/opinion/op-ed/soapbox/article214458919.html](https://www.sacbee.com/opinion/op-ed/soapbox/article214458919.html))

Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee, further reports, "Separately, the State Board released a preliminary plan for re-allocating more of the Sacramento River watershed's flows to fish. That plan calls for increasing the unimpeded flows to 45 percent to 65 percent. Currently, less than half the water on the Sacramento reaches the Delta because of diversions by farms and cities along the way. A more detailed proposal on the Sacramento River will come later this year."

By reconsidering funding of the California Water Fix, we are not suggesting leaving the rest of the State of California high and dry without adequate water supplies. However, we don't want to throw good money after bad with actions that cause more harm than good. As Ms. Marcus states, "Californians need, want and deserve a healthy environment,

agriculture and communities. That happens best when people rise to the occasion together.”

3. Potential Solutions/Alternatives – Seeking Regional Self-Sufficiency and Reducing Reliance on the Delta – See links below

1. Cover the California Aqueduct to prevent evaporation
2. Restore Tulare Lake Basin with water during high water years
3. Offshore desalinization using wave action
4. Drip irrigation could save water and would fill Hetch Hetchy Reservoir sixteen (16) times a year
5. Solar Powered Water Harvesters
6. Primary Water (also called Primordial Water or water from the mantle of the earth could be accessed)

Of course, rain water capture, recycling and water conservation top the list; and more information can be found on the alternatives listed above using the links below.

Thank you for researching the above issues to address these concerns and considering delaying your vote to a later date.

Respectfully,

/signed/ Barbara Daly, Co-Chair
North Delta CARES Action Committee
(Community Area Residents for Environmental Stability)

/signed/ Anna Swenson, Co-Chair

To: Board Officers and Members: Randy Record, Linda Ackerman, David DeJesus, Gloria Gray, John Murray, Steve Blois, Judy Abdo, Richard Atwater, Sylvia Ballin, Brett Barbre, Peter Beard, Michael Camacho, Gloria Cordero, Glen Dake, Larry Dick, Stephen Faessel, Donald Galleano, Mark Gold, Phillip Hawkins, Michael Hogan, Cynthia Kurtz, Russell Lefevre, Keith Lewinger, Michele Martinez, Larry McKenney, John Morris, Lorraine Paskett, Glen Peterson, Barry Pressman, Jesus Quinonez, Marsha Ramos, Elsa Saxod, Zareh Sinanyan, Fern Steiner, Charles Trevino, Leticia Vasquez-Wilson, Harold Williams, and Janna Zurita

Cc: Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris
Don Nottoli, Sacramento County Supervisor
Skip Thomson, Solano County Supervisor
Chuck Winn, San Joaquin County Supervisor
Diane Burgis, Contra Costa County Supervisor
Oscar Villegas, Yolo County Supervisor
Erik Vink, Executive Director, for Delta Protection Commissioners
Felicia Marcus, SWRCB Chairwoman
Tam Doduc, SWRCB Chairwoman

Randy Fiorini, Chairman, for Delta Stewardship Council
Richard Santos, for Santa Clara Valley Water District
Assemblymember Jim Frazier
Assemblymember Susan Eggman
Mark Pruner, Clarksburg Fire District
Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee
Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla, Restore The Delta
Deirdre Des Jardins, CA Water Research
Scott Anderson, Sacramento News & Review
Dan Bacher, Fish Sniffer
Gene Beley, Central Valley Business Times
Nicky Suard, Snug Harbor
Bill Wells, CA Delta Chambers of Commerce & Visitors Bureau
Jan McCleary, Save the Delta Alliance
Wendy Heaton, NDC
David Stirling, Esq
Osha Meserve, Esq.
Brad and Emily Pappalardo, Esq.,
Michael Brodsky, Esq.
Michael George, Delta Watermaster
James Motlow, Locke Management Association

Further Information:

1. Gas Fields and Gas Wells:

Attachment – Figure 13-1: Known Gas Wells and Fields in the Delta Region (DWR-212)
<https://www.dailynews.com/2016/06/23/remembering-the-17-miners-killed-in-sylmar-tunnel-blast-45-years-ago/>
<https://www.lafra.org/lafd-history-the-sylmar-tunnel-explosion-june-23-1971/>
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/bay_delta/california_waterfi/x/exhibits/docs/petitioners_exhibit/dwr/dwr_212.pdf

2. Beyond the Water Wars Articles:

<https://www.sacbee.com/opinion/op-ed/soapbox/article214458919.html>
<https://www.sacbee.com/latest-news/article214437104.html>

3. Solutions:

Drip irrigation: <https://www.circleofblue.org/2009/world/peter-gleick-saving-california-agriculture/>

Tulare Lake:

[http://wdl.water.ca.gov/irwm/grants/docs/Archives/Prop84/Submitted_Applications/P84_Round2_Implementation/Kaweah%20Delta%20Water%20Conservation%20District%20\(201312340027\)/Attachment%2013%20-%20Att13_IG2_Delta_1of1.pdf](http://wdl.water.ca.gov/irwm/grants/docs/Archives/Prop84/Submitted_Applications/P84_Round2_Implementation/Kaweah%20Delta%20Water%20Conservation%20District%20(201312340027)/Attachment%2013%20-%20Att13_IG2_Delta_1of1.pdf)

Wave Action Desalinization: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTbdU-NHJhw>

Air-to-Water: <https://www.wqpmag.com/researchers-develop-solar-powered-water-harvester>

Primary Water: http://www.primarywaterinstitute.org/about_contact.html