

To: The California State Water Resources Control Board.

The primary reasons that I oppose the permit and the Delta Tunnels project, are the costs involved and the financial legacy it will leave behind on this region and California as a whole. First, there are the project's costs. The research and report-writing was estimated at \$250 million with \$1.25 billion slated just to finish the planning phase. I've heard estimates of \$15 billion for the actual construction of the tunnels, but based on the scope of the project and the actual completion budgets of other public projects in recent years, it's easy to see that the final cost to tax payers will be substantially more.

In the debate around the tunnels, discussion of costs is typically limited to the planning and building of the tunnel itself but fails to recognize others that will follow. Who is going to pay for the additional infrastructure costs as local wells are de-watered or contaminated? Who's going to pay for the litigation costs when water-rights holders are infringed upon? How about environmental cleanup?

In addition to these known (and unknown) costs that will directly impact all California taxpayers, there are the costs that aren't as easily quantified. The degradation of water quality due to saltwater intrusion and build-up of contaminants will impact our region in many ways, threatening our regional economies, reducing our quality of life, and contributing to the deterioration of the Delta as an eco-system that supports all of us.

The Delta is one of the largest estuaries in western North America and is a unique ecological resource. The current downtrend of Delta Smelt and other fish populations tells an important story, but in concentrating on population data points alone, we're missing the forest for the trees. The reality of this project and the approval of this permit, is that it will greatly impact the Delta eco-system on ALL environmental levels—these would be irreversible changes.

When evaluating any project, you have to weigh the costs involved with the potential value to determine whether to move forward or not. With such high costs involved in this project, it's staggering that the state is still attempting to move forward. With the long-term forecasts predicting a wider trend of less precipitation in Northern California, and with the limits on water intake that have been set, will the tunnels even be able to break even in terms of cost relative to their water intake goals? Will there even be enough water to transport?

It is important to look at other solutions. Desalination plants, like the one recently opened in Southern California, are not cheap either, but at least they're sustainable, leave a smaller environmental footprint, and will be more dependable in terms of water production over time.

Why are we throwing away our money and resources like this when there are smarter, more reliable options available to us? I urge you to help California re-focus its resources and its capital and reject the permit application so we can move forward in a better direction.

Sincerely,
Jeff E. van Löben Sels
1441 27th Ave
Sacramento, CA 95822