

San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority



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The San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority serves 20 member agencies reliant upon water conveyed through the California Bay-Delta by the United States Bureau of Reclamation's Central Valley Project. The members of the authority deliver water to approximately 1.1 million acres of prime farmland, nearly 2 million California residents, and millions of waterfowl dependent upon the more than 100,000 acres of managed wetlands within the Pacific Flyway.

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SAN LUIS & DELTA-MENDOTA WATER AUTHORITY REMOVES SUPPORT FROM BDCP DUE TO ESCALATING COSTS, LACK OF ASSURANCES

In a special board meeting today the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority voted to suspend continued funding for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP), after four years of effort and nearly \$150 million in committed funds. The action removes nearly half of the funding for the completion of the plan, which is estimated to cost an additional \$100 million.

"We cannot rationalize continuing to pay these costs if we cannot trust the federal government to act in good faith," said Dan Nelson, Executive Director of the Water Authority.

Nelson expressed surprise that officials in the Department of the Interior had denied that they were proposing additional restrictions on California's water supplies. "The new regulations they are trying to impose on BDCP would not only reduce our water supplies but they would also deny California water users any assurance that these supplies would not be cut even further in the future."

As one example, Nelson recalled a meeting last June between state and federal agencies and consultants working on BDCP. Five alternatives to move water through the Delta that would benefit the environment were discussed. But after the meeting, the federal agencies added more alternatives that required further study and more money. "That just delayed the plan even longer, added to the costs, and increased the uncertainty that there would be any beneficial result for the people of California," Nelson said.

SLDMWA signed the BDCP Planning Agreement in 2006, which had as co-equal goals (1) to conserve and manage fish and terrestrial species in the Delta, and (2) to restore and protect water supply, water quality, and ecosystem health within a stable regulatory framework.

"Six months ago, the Department of the Interior was issuing announcements of its commitment to the co-equal goals and its willingness to correct some of the problems with their regulations," Nelson said. "Our members still believe in achieving the co-equal goals and we are hopeful that BDCP can provide an opportunity to address traditional problems in new and more successful ways.

"Lately, however, it has become painfully clear that the federal government is no longer committed to

advancing the co-equal goals. The lack of creativity and leadership from Washington is perpetuating the same flawed practices that have led too many of California's fisheries to the brink of extinction and imperiled our once thriving economy."

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