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AN EGREGIOUS AGREEMENT

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An unprecedented coalition of 242 environmentally-oriented organizations blasted a recent federal and state rollover to south of Delta water exporters. The breadth of the opposition to an agency Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) extended from Northern California and Oregon organizations to South Coast groups, to environmental and environmental justice organizations, commercial and recreational fishing organizations, and Indian tribes.

The MOA in question turns over exceptional powers to a select group of exporters involved in the development of the Bay Delta Conservation Program, a program designed to control the future of water supplies from the Bay Delta. No other exporters are granted the same power to influence the project development process. The MOA provides the exporters with unacceptable influence over the science and technical analyses fundamental to this kind of complex project; it allows exporters to obtain advance reviews of planning documents to the exclusion of others; it allows the exporters to select project consultants. It also provides water exporters assurances on water supplies while ignoring the same kinds of assurances for the recovery of fish species or Delta habitat; it dictates an unrealistic schedule that will preclude a full analysis of the numerous alternatives to a Peripheral Canal that are available to satisfy the goals of the project, and it changes project goals to one that would increase exports instead of increasing water supply predictability and reducing supply vulnerability. It is clearly a “stacked deck,” as the environmental coalition points out in their [letter](#) to federal and state agencies.

The Bay Delta Conservation Plan is an unprecedented experiment combining one of the largest multi-species habitat conservation plans in history with the potential for a massive hydrologic modification to the largest estuary on the West Coast. It is essential that this project serve its fundamental purpose as a conservation plan for the critical fish and wildlife resources of the estuary, and not primarily as a Peripheral Canal construction project to increase exports from an already severely degraded estuary.

The environmental coalition appropriately asks that the Memorandum of Agreement be rescinded and rewritten. Here’s hoping the federal and state agencies listen to this unprecedented expression of public input that they always claim to be looking for.