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November 29, 2012

ENVIRONMENTAL WATER CAUCUS BLASTS BDCP

A spokesman for the Environmental Water Caucus took a few verbal swipes at the Bay Delta Conservation Project (BDCP) during a November 29 Public Meeting in Sacramento. Nick Di Croce, one of the facilitators for the Caucus, indicated that most of the environmental organizations that make up the Caucus are opposed to the proposed tunnels or any other peripheral conveyance intended to divert Sacramento River water under or around the Delta. He characterized BDCP as an “impending environmental and financial disaster whose costs and unsettled financing are going to bury the tunnel-oriented project.” He indicated that his organization has questioned the Interior Department and the California Resources Department on what the real costs of fixing the Delta are, who is really going to pay for the project, and where the water is going to come from. Their questions have not been answered.

The Caucus also cited the three major factors that must be a part of any major Delta project. They are: (1) A detailed analysis of how much water the Delta needs to be healthy and how much water is really available for export from the Delta; (2) A valid cost benefit analysis to determine which projects should be undertaken, and; (3) A balancing of Public Trust values in order to protect the public’s heritage and the ecosystem services of its streams and estuaries. A recent workshop conducted by the State Water Board has shown that legitimate claims to water flowing into the Bay Delta exceed the available water supply by more than five times in most years – which begs the question of whether there is more water available for BDCP. The refusal of the BDCP project to perform a legitimate cost benefit analysis is understandable; it will undoubtedly show the project is not to be able to pay for itself without inventing specious billions of dollars of guaranteed assurances. Similarly, not balancing public trust values is also understandable; that would show that the economic value of the services provided to the state and public by healthy, flowing rivers and estuaries far exceeds the value of water exports to a select few business enterprises south of the Delta.

The Caucus recommends that the BDCP discontinue its proposed plan for tunnels and adopt a more sustainable and less expensive plan which has been presented to the Delta Stewardship Council by the Caucus. Instead of the \$14 billion tunnels, which will be buried before we get a chance to know if BDCP can work, the Environmental Water Caucus plan includes a more aggressive water conservation and efficiency program to more than make up for reduced exports, the elimination of irrigation water for impaired farmlands in the San Joaquin Valley, the installation of improved fish screens in the South Delta, the continuation of the Biological Opinions’ pumping restrictions which have been helpful to the fisheries, the reinforcing of key levees in the Delta, and a series of related actions that will improve the ecology of the Delta and provide a higher degree of water supply reliability for farmers and urbans. Details of the plan are described at www.ewccalifornia.org.

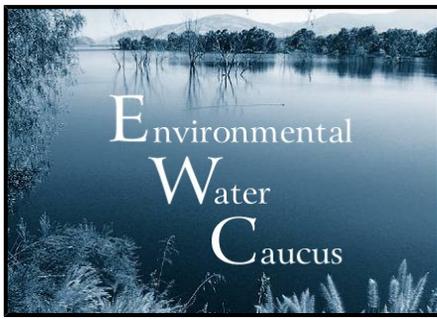
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AquAlliance
Butte Environmental Council
California Coastkeeper Alliance
California Save Our Streams Council
California Sportfishing Protection Alliance
California Striped Bass Association
California Water Impact Network
Clean Water Action
Desal Response Group
Environmental Justice Coalition for Water
Earth Law Center
Fish Sniffer Magazine
Foothill Conservancy
Friends of the River
Food & Water Watch
Granite Bay Flycasters
Institute for Fisheries Resources
The Karuk Tribe
North Coast Environmental Center
Northern California Council, [Federation of Fly Fishers](#)
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
Restore the Delta
Sacramento River Preservation Trust
Sacramento Valley Environmental Water Caucus
Save the Bay Association
Sierra Club California
Sierra Club, SF Bay Chapter
Sierra Nevada Alliance
Southern California Watershed Alliance
Water for California
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