

UPDATE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Date: September 12, 2009

The Legislature's 2009 session came to a close without passage of the package of Delta/water management/financing measures. However, the pressure of the end-of-session deadline led to considerable progress in narrowing the differences, prompting the Democratic leadership in the Legislature to call for a Special Session to conclude deliberations and approve a comprehensive package. It is solely within the authority of the Governor to call a special session. We will carefully monitor the next steps.

While it is obviously frustrating to come close but not quite close enough to passing this package, it is important to look at the end-of-session atmosphere on this issue. There remains a widespread consensus that water is an issue that must be addressed by the Legislature. There is support for a series bills on Delta governance and water management that has the support of many mainstream environmental groups, Metropolitan and some (but not all) other major water districts. The Democratic leadership proposed a water bond with funds for surface storage under a continuous appropriations process that had been long sought by the Governor and Republican leadership in the Legislature.

There was a good-faith effort Friday night to refine the bond language to the satisfaction of both the Republican and Democratic caucuses. As for the "policy" bill, SB 68 (Steinberg), the component which called for expanded water rights enforcement appeared to be generating the most opposition, and there remained disagreements on approaches to improving water use efficiency statewide, as well.

Simply put, we ran out of time on Friday but we did not run out of hope. The Legislature remains on the brink of a historic water package. We will continue to provide updates as events unfold.