



The Honorable Darrell Steinberg
Senate President Pro Tempore
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Karen Bass
Speaker of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for the Delta and Statewide Water Policy Package

Dear Senator Steinberg and Assemblymember Bass,

We write to support the package of five water policy bills published by legislative counsel (Leg. Counsel draft as of 9/11/09; 10:02 a.m.). The bills represent the most ambitious and progressive package of state water policy reform in the last three decades in California. If passed in their current form, we believe these bills will produce a more responsible, economically sound, and transparent approach to the state's complex water and environmental needs than the state has ever had. This package of bills also represents a critical effort to implement the far-reaching recommendations of the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force's Strategic Plan, which was created by the Governor and the legislature to develop a new vision for solving the crisis in the Delta.

The package contains a number of measures crucial to using our precious water resources more fairly and efficiently, restoring our iconic salmon fisheries, and providing a more reliable water supply for farms, cities, and ecosystems. In particular, these bills will:

- Implement the Governor's call to reduce water consumption by 20% by 2020

- Reduce reliance on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta by increasing water recycling, cost-effective efficiency, and regional self-sufficiency
- Establish performance standards and new public trust flows critical to achieving a healthy and resilient ecosystem
- Ensure that the restoration planning process for the Delta must meet the highest standards for species recovery
- Ensure that construction of any new conveyance facility cannot begin until the State Board has issued a permit that includes binding protections for California's beleaguered fisheries
- Substantially increase the State Board's power to enforce water rights and limit illegal diversions
- Expand groundwater management and monitoring efforts
- Restore the Delta ecosystem while addressing water supply and water quality problems
- Require Delta agencies to respond to climate change and the threats it presents to the Delta communities
- Provide for numerous measures to substantially improve the reliability of water supplies statewide

California's water conflicts have proven intractable for too long. This package of bills represents an historic opportunity to change this dynamic and launch a new era of sustainable water management.

Thank you for your leadership and we look forward to working with you and the other members of the legislature on this critical effort.

Sincerely,

Barry Nelson
Natural Resources Defense Council

Cynthia Koehler
Environmental Defense Fund

Gary Bobker
The Bay Institute

Melva Bigelow
The Nature Conservancy

Kim Delfino
Defenders of Wildlife

Zeke Grader
Pacific Coast Federation of
Fishermen's Associations

Dan Taylor
Audubon California