



## Frequently Asked Questions: Next Steps in Delta Conveyance

In December 2020, Metropolitan's Board of Directors will consider funding the state's environmental review and planning process for a single-tunnel Delta conveyance project in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

### Why do we need the Delta conveyance project?

- We need to modernize our state's aging water delivery system, making it more resilient to climate extremes and ensuring a reliable water supply for families, farms and businesses.
- The Delta Conveyance Project is necessary to protect the long-term viability of the State Water Project supply, which provides about one-third of Southern California's supply.
- Climate change is shifting the way precipitation falls in the state. Snowpack is decreasing and droughts are becoming more severe. Sea level is rising, increasing the salinity in the Delta. The state's aging water infrastructure was not built for these new climate realities. We need a modernized system in the Delta that can capture runoff from large storms when they happen, and then move it into storage for times of drought.
- The Delta Conveyance Project will help ensure we are better prepared for impacts from climate change and other threats, including earthquakes, and bring greater resilience to the Delta waterways and its ecosystem.

### Wouldn't it be better to invest in local projects instead of importing water from Northern California?

- This is not an either/or issue. We need to do both.
- That's why Southern California is working hard to increase water conservation and more local sources of water supplies. But many of these supplies are only viable when built on a foundation of high-quality water from the State Water Project.
- For example, our local groundwater supplies are replenished with imported water – there isn't enough local rainfall to refill the groundwater basins. And recycling water for use again and again requires starting with high-quality source water, like that delivered by the State Water Project, to make it cost-effective.
- California is fortunate to have a large supply of water in the northern Sierra to support the state's people, farms, ecosystems and economy. Past investments have made it one of our most affordable water supplies.
- The proposed project is a crucial part of the Governor's portfolio approach to water management and will help California water agencies develop their local water supply projects.

### **Why do we need to fund this work now? Couldn't we wait until the economy improves?**

- Investing in a Delta Conveyance project is the most cost-effective way to secure our water future and we need to act now to plan for the future.
- The Delta Conveyance Project is undergoing an environmental review, with a Draft Environmental Impact Report expected mid-2022.
- Metropolitan, along with most of the State Water Project Contractors, is being asked to provide funding now to keep the project moving forward consistent with the State's schedule with environmental review and planning work for the single tunnel project.
- Metropolitan and other California water agencies have collectively spent more than a decade studying the feasibility, cost and environmental benefits and impacts of this infrastructure modernization project.
- Making this investment now will avoid costly delays and allow Metropolitan's Board to make an informed decision in the near future on whether to fund construction of the project.

### **Why might Metropolitan invest more in this planning than its current contracted State Water Project share?**

- State Water Contractors north of the Delta don't benefit from the Delta Conveyance Project, so they are not participating. Some south of Delta contractors also may opt out of the project's costs and benefits.
- If Metropolitan takes a larger share of the costs for this planning work, it would also receive the commensurate benefits and water from the project if constructed.
- Agencies that opt out would continue relying on south Delta pumping and would have to face any future operational constraints and risks there.
- Assuming up to a 65% participation level, Metropolitan's funding agreement costs for project planning would be up to \$81.2 million dollars for calendar years 2021 and 2022.
- Participation at the 47.2% level would be about \$58.9 million for calendar years 2021 and 2022 for planning and pre-construction costs, representing Metropolitan's Table A amount and its proportional share of the north of Delta public water agencies not participating in the project.
- Metropolitan's adopted two-year budget includes \$50 million dollars for the Delta Conveyance Project expenditures, so the Board may consider an additional authorization of funds of up to \$31 million dollars for the project planning calendar years 2021 and 2022.
- DWR returned about \$34 million to Metropolitan that was unspent during the California WaterFix process. The Metropolitan Board may consider applying some or all of those returned funds to its share of funding.