

Why the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta Estuary Matters to Stockton and San Joaquin County & Why the Delta Tunnels Will Strangle This Community



RESTORE THE DELTA NEEDS YOU TO STOP THE DELTA TUNNELS

The proposed CA Water Fix/BDCP tunnels¹ and the current over pumping of the Delta² are the largest transfer of public wealth to private resources in the history of California, and maybe in the history of the United States.

The San Joaquin County is 40% of the Delta. We have a lot to lose if the proposed tunnels and over pumping of the Delta is allowed to continue. The Delta supports a \$5.2 billion annual agricultural industry, 40% of those farms are in the San Joaquin County. They are diversified³ family farms that date six generations back and embrace sustainable farming practices—the majority of these farms are the state’s cleanest zero-discharge farms.

Furthermore, the Delta is home to a \$750 million recreational economy. It is the nursery for a \$1.5 billion California salmon economy – and is the fresh water source for all the crabs we eat at crab feeds from California fisheries. The tourism industry at Pier 39 in San Francisco is tied to the health of the Delta.

Tens of thousands of people in the five Delta counties, including San Joaquin County, are sustenance fishers; these include the low-income environmental justice communities such as the local Hmong, Laos, Cambodian, and Mexican demographic in Stockton. These communities are dependent on Delta fish for their nutritional deficiencies and needs. Besides depleting the amount of fish in the Delta waters, the proposed Delta tunnels and over pumping will further exacerbate the issue of contamination of Delta fish that people consume.

The Delta tunnels will make our Stockton Delta water intake project inoperable because our water will be contaminated with salt water. Our municipal utilities (Stockton, Lodi, Tracy) won’t be able to discharge waste water without violating Federal water laws. Residents will be paying for new problems through projects with higher water bills.

Stockton’s vision for downtown redevelopment will be impacted negatively by the Delta tunnels. Can you imagine a beautiful newly developed city center surrounded by solid sheets of hyacinth (*it will worsen*) and polluted, stagnant, smelly water? And did we forget to mention mosquitos galore?

The Delta can be the source of economic revival for San Joaquin County and Stockton. The Delta is a unique resource for recreation, including fishing, swimming, wine tasting, wind surfing, hiking, boating, camping, and bird watching. The Delta’s status as the “switchyard” of California water makes San Joaquin County and Stockton the ideal location to start an economy based on developing, creating, and manufacturing water efficiency technology. We need to fight for the Delta to secure our

¹ See separate handout: “Save the SF-Bay Delta, Stop the Tunnels.”

² Through those big canals you see at Tracy that divert Delta freshwater.

³ A variety of crops and not just one crop.

Restore the Delta is a 501(c)3 organization that works in the areas of public education and outreach so that all Californians recognize the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta as part of California’s natural heritage, deserving of restoration.

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future; we cannot let our public trust resource and wealth get transferred to mega-growers in the Central Valley desert.

70% of the water taken from the Delta goes to big corporate agriculture down the I-5 from the San Luis Reservoir into Kern County. That strip of land belches pollutants back into the San Joaquin River decimating fisheries and destroying water quality for our local farms and municipalities. These same farms owned by hedge funds, insurance companies, and billionaire farmers such as Stewart Resnick (POM Wonderful, Wonderful Pistachios, Halos, and more) only contribute 0.3% to California's GDP. They pollute groundwater for their farmworker communities and pay their seasonal workers substandard wages.

These same groups are running viral astroturfing campaigns disparaging the Delta, Delta communities, Delta community organizations, and spending billions lobbying in Washington DC and Sacramento to weaken water quality standards and species protections in the Delta. They use our community's mistakes against us to justify the water grab (What community doesn't have struggles?). They are using California administrative processes to grab the water that is vital to this region's wealth and prosperity.

When it comes to water policies and decisions, Stockton's geo-political interests are with the San Francisco Bay Area, not with Fresno, due to the fresh water protections needed for the Delta -- the life blood of our environmental and economic health in SJ County.

The Delta is a diamond in the rough. It is the largest estuary on the west coast of the Americas. It needs improved public access, and enhanced recreational resources so that area urban residents can have the opportunity to embrace it as our vital resource and reconnect with our historical and cultural heritage. But we can't address this issue of public access as long as over pumping in the Delta is continuing. We need adequate amounts of fresh water flows for public access. But such great things cannot happen if two-thirds of the Delta's fresh water supply is diverted to unsustainable agriculture in the South Valley.

Should we sacrifice the survival of the most magnificent estuary on the west coast of the Americas and the family farms in San Joaquin County for unsustainable development of desert almonds by Westland's Water District and Stewart Resnick in Kern County? That is the choice California faces. Even farmers outside the Delta on the east side of San Joaquin County need to stop the tunnels project because if tunnels are built their groundwater basin will turn to salt.

Don't be fooled! For our region, sustainability is not a cocktail at a new hipster bar. It's fighting to protect our environmental well-being, our economy in the present and the future, and our cultural identity. It's about defending the Delta.

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