

Bay Bridge Replacement vs CA Water Fix/Delta Tunnels



Bay Bridge Eastern Span History

Costs and Time

The Bay Bridge Replacement was estimated to cost \$1.5 billion by CalTrans with a seven-year construction period. Depending on how one counts the years, construction took fourteen years and cost \$6.4 billion. ¹

Seismic risk

“Californians spent \$6.4 billion to replace the old Bay Bridge eastern span because it was unlikely to survive a major earthquake. Now, mounting revelations of construction problems are calling into question whether the new bridge can withstand the Big One.”
*Jaxon Van Derbeken SF Chronicle, May 11, 2015*³

Delta Tunnels History

Costs and Time

\$250 million dollars has been spent on Delta tunnels planning and processes to date paid for by public water agencies, state, and federal agencies before one shovel of dirt has been turned. The project only has a preliminary engineering report completed without full design. The project is reported to cost \$15 billion without interest, operation costs, or allowance for cost over runs. Project construction time has been extended from 10 to 14 years.²

Seismic risk

“Listening to the governor, earthquake protection is the main economic argument. But the state’s experts estimated seismic-risk reduction to water exports was only worth a cumulative \$400 million over 50 years. Why is this value so low? First, it is a very low probability event even in the most pessimistic models. Second, the outage to water exports isn’t as bad as you hear in TV commercials. Department of Water Resources Director Mark Cowin correctly described it as “weeks or months” in a recent media call, not years. In a worst-case earthquake scenario, the tunnels might prevent 2 million to 3 million acre-feet in lost water exports, a costly but manageable shortage. For comparison, the current drought has cut surface water

¹ [SF Gate: Lengthy costly trail to Bay Bridge’s Eastern Span](#)

² [The Guardian: \\$8bn habitat conservation plan scrapped as California prioritises agribusiness](#)

³ [SF Gate: Plague of problems puts Bay Bridge seismic safety in question](#)

