



Via email: karla.Nemeth@water.ca.gov and wade.crowfoot@resources.ca.gov

March 27, 2020

Karla Nemeth, Director
California Department of Water Resources
1416 Ninth Street, 11th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, 13th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Cessation of Delta Conveyance Project Actions During Novel Coronavirus Pandemic

Dear Secretary Crowfoot and Director Nemeth:

We write to demand—respectfully—that the California Natural Resources Agency and Department of Water Resources suspend and cease all Delta Conveyance Project (DCP) activity that entails actions by state and federal agencies on the DCP during the duration of the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic emergency. There is plenty of other work that may proceed in the absence of such actions from other agencies. But there is no justification for DCP to seek and receive benefit of other agencies' actions for which public participation is critical, and during the pandemic, scarce and distracted.

Our request is about priorities and perspective: In the midst of a viral pandemic for which no human on Earth at its emergence had known immunity, the vast majority of the California public will be focused on surviving and coping with personal and social health and economic effects of the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by transmission of the Novel Coronavirus. To continue seeking public approvals for a major infrastructure project at this time appears to us, whether intended or not, duplicitous. It smacks of "never let a good crisis go to waste" thinking. As a matter of public priorities during the pandemic, such actions are non-essential and should therefore be curtailed.

This morning it came to our attention that DWR is seeking a "Statement of No Objection" from the Central Valley Flood Protection Board to signal to the US Army Corps of Engineers in Sacramento to proceed with the Corps' 408 levee protection assurance process in relation to the DCP. This proposed action was not noticed in any

significant way to the public other than via the CVFPB's web site. We have in a separate letter requested that the Board pull this item from its consent calendar, and we copied you both on this request.

It strikes us as reasonable that design work and preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report on the DCP could continue under our demand as elements of "working from home." We are simply insisting that all public processes toward actions supporting the DCP cease which otherwise advance the project at this time and for the duration of the pandemic emergency. **The public simply must not be left behind in the DCP process just because of a viral pandemic that was not of their making.**

Public outreach and input is essential to ensuring that the state is held fully accountable as it proceeds with planning the DCP. Whether intentional or not, allowing a seemingly pro-forma action as this "Statement of No Objection" to go forward without explanation or notice to the public is unacceptable when California is under a statewide "stay-at-home" order for social and physical distancing. Many people, including RTD members and community coalition friends, are stressing about how to cope and survive the pandemic. **It is unacceptable to allow this high-profile project to now fly under the radar during the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic without public participation in significant public agency decisions about it.**

Thank you for considering this demand.

Sincerely,



Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla
Executive Director



Tim Stroshane
Policy Analyst



Kathryn Phillips
Director and Policy Advocate
Sierra Club California



Brandon Dawson
Water Policy Analyst
Sierra Club California

cc: Governor Gavin Newsom
Mayor Michael Tubbs
E. Joaquin Esquivel, Chair, State Water Resources Control Board
Leslie M. Gallagher, Executive Director, Central Valley Flood Protection Board

Kathryn Mallon, Executive Director, Delta Conveyance Design and Construction
Authority

Doug Obegi, Natural Resources Defense Council

Dillon Delvo, Little Manila Rising

Nicholas Hatten, LGBTQ+Social Justice

Tama Brisbane, With Our Words

Sammy Nunez, Fathers & Families of San Joaquin

Adam Keats, Adam Keats Law