



October 17, 2008
For Immediate Release

Contact: Scott Miller (206) 972-8244
Keith Coolidge (916) 275-6809

Task Force Unveils Statewide Blueprint for a Sustainable Delta
Delta Vision Strategic Plan Will Ensure a Reliable Water Supply and Protect Ecosystem

SACRAMENTO – Today, Governor Schwarzenegger’s Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force finalized and adopted the Delta Vision Strategic Plan; a comprehensive set of recommendations designed to ensure long-term sustainable management of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The plan balances the need for a reliable water supply for California, and protection for the Delta’s extraordinary environmental resources.

The result of nearly two years of intensive work, the Strategic Plan broadens the focus of past efforts to recommend actions that address the full array of economic, natural resource, infrastructure and governance issues necessary to achieve a sustainable Delta. According to the Task Force, a number of important facts make the timing of this plan absolutely critical.

- While the state’s population continues to increase, the water supply in California is static. It is not growing.
- Individual use of water has moderated slightly in California in recent years, but more people, businesses and farms means more water is required. We do not appear to be taking conservation seriously.
- The Delta ecosystem is in serious decline, as is the complex water delivery system that runs through the Delta.
- Improving the Delta ecosystem is a legally required condition of improving the water delivery system in California.
- The current system of governing water in California --letting more than 220 government agencies, federal, state and local, independently operate in the Delta -- just does not work and needs to be changed.

1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311, Sacramento, CA 95814 Ph. 916.653.5656 Fax 916.653.8102 <http://resources.ca.gov>



“If we don’t fix the Delta, we are headed for a water crisis,” says Task Force chair Phil Isenberg of Sacramento. “The Delta as we know it today is not sustainable. Our plan is designed to meet the needs of California’s growing population, from north to south, east to west. But, in order for it to work, we have to think statewide, not regionally.”

Task Force Member Sunne Wright McPeak talked about the need for balance this way. “For too long there has been a false debate between “conservation” and “construction” to address the water crisis—both are needed.”

The recommendations approved today flow from seven overarching goals:

1. Legally acknowledge the co-equal status of restoring the Delta ecosystem and creating a more reliable water supply for California
2. Recognize and enhance the unique cultural, recreational, and agricultural values of the Delta
3. Restore the Delta ecosystem as an integral part of a healthy estuary
4. Promote statewide water conservation, efficiency, and sustainable use
5. Build facilities to improve the existing water conveyance system and expand statewide storage
6. Reduce risks to people, property, and state interests in the Delta
7. Establish a new governance structure with the authority, responsibility, accountability, science support and secure funding to achieve these goals

According to Task Force Member Ray Seed, “Delta Vision is a statewide plan. It was formulated to balance the needs of stakeholders throughout California, and will not benefit one region over or at the expense of another.”

Task Force Member Bill Reilly summed up the tasks ahead this way, “The challenge ahead of California is to break the habit of committing water exports from the Delta and leaving the Delta ecosystem to cope with what’s left. Our objective is to restore the ecosystem and ensure reliable water exports at realistic levels.”

Other Task Force Members urged the stakeholders and legislators to consider the package as a single plan, not a collection of recommendations.

“An integrated solution is vital,” said Task Force Member Rick Frank. “The Delta cannot be ‘fixed’ by any single action, and any attempt to ‘cherry pick’ ideas will upset the carefully crafted balance of the plan and could doom the enterprise to failure. That’s a failure that California simply can no longer afford.”

Task Force Member Monica Florian agreed. “It is a package deal. It only works together. It only works as a whole.”

The Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force was created two years ago by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to achieve a durable solution for Delta sustainability. The group sought advice from a variety of water, environmental, business, and agriculture experts, and hosted a series of community meetings across the state to solicit public comment.

The Delta Vision Strategic Plan represents the best available knowledge, and reflects input received from hundreds of California residents who testified at meetings or submitted comments in writing. It follows a vision document developed by the Task Force in December 2007, called *Our Vision for the California Delta*. The Plan outlines strategies for addressing a range of threats facing the Delta, including urbanization, earthquake risk, invasive species and the decline of desirable species, climate change, a fragile levee system and the lack of definitive governance. The Strategic Plan will now be reviewed by the Delta Vision Committee, chaired by Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman. The Committee will send implementing recommendations to the Governor by year’s end, with the expectation that enabling legislation will be adopted in 2009.

The Strategic Plan, images, and meeting schedule can be found at www.deltavision.ca.gov. B-roll (Beta) is available by request.

###