

## Significant progress made toward Delta ecosystem restoration and providing a more reliable water system for California

The Delta Vision Foundation is very pleased that all seven goals of the *Delta Vision Strategic Plan*<sup>1</sup> are incorporated into the Delta/water policy bills, enacted by the Legislature on November 4, 2009.

Importantly, the legislation recognizes the need for linked action in several important areas, as strongly recommended by the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force. The seven goals are:

1. Make the co-equal goals of water supply reliability and ecosystem restoration the legal foundation of Delta and water policy making.
2. Recognize and enhance the unique cultural, recreational and agricultural values of the California Delta as an evolving place, an action critical to achieving the co-equal goals.
3. Restore the Delta ecosystem as the heart 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; operate both to achieve the co-equal goals.
6. Reduce risks to people, property and state interests in the Delta by effective emergency preparedness, appropriate land uses and strategic levee investments.
7. Establish a new governance structure with the authority, responsibility, accountability, science support and secure funding to achieve these goals.

Phil Isenberg, Chair of the Delta Vision Foundation, applauded the successful passage of these policies, noting that old patterns of downplaying Delta and other ecosystem needs, while behaving as if water supplies were inexhaustible, had resulted in less reliable water supplies for all Californians and a gravely impaired Delta ecosystem.

“Passage of a package addressing all seven goals of Delta Vision is very welcome progress,” Isenberg stated. “As these bills are implemented, we will learn what else needs to be done to ensure the desired results. The members of the Delta Vision Foundation are heartened at this major step toward Delta ecosystem health and a more secure water future for all Californians. “

### Brief synopsis of the bills as they relate to the Delta Vision Goals:

**SB1 7x (Simitian and Steinberg)** adopted the co-equal goals of water system reliability and an improved Delta ecosystem (goal 1). The legislation adopts significant governance reforms (goal 7) and also recognizes and enhances the Delta as a place (goal 2) by:

a) Modifying the composition and roles of the existing Delta Protection Commission and ensuring their right to participate in development of the new Delta Plan (goal 2),

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<sup>1</sup>. The *Delta Vision Strategic Plan* was adopted October 2008 by the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force. [http://deltavision.ca.gov/StrategicPlanningProcess/StaffDraft/Delta\\_Vision\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_standard\\_resolution.pdf](http://deltavision.ca.gov/StrategicPlanningProcess/StaffDraft/Delta_Vision_Strategic_Plan_standard_resolution.pdf)

b) Establishing a new Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy, a primary state agency to implement ecosystem restoration in the Delta and to support economic sustainability of the Delta (goals 2 and 3) and a Delta Investment Fund (goal 2),

c) Establishing a new seven person Delta Stewardship Council as an independent agency of the state, and directing the Council to adopt and overseeing implementation of a comprehensive management plan for the Delta (Delta Plan). The legislation also establishes procedures by which state and local actions will become consistent with the Delta Plan. The bill transfers existing authority and programs of the California Bay Delta Authority to the Council and abolishes the Authority. The bill importantly establishes a Delta science program and Delta Independent Science Board (goals 1, 3, 7).

d) The bill imposes several significant requirements on the Bay Delta Conservation Plan if it is to be incorporated in the Delta Plan (goals 5 and 3), and requires the State Water Resources Control Board to establish an effective system of Delta watershed diversion data collection and to establish flow criteria for the Delta watershed (goals 3 and 4).

e) The bill directs the Council to incorporate flood control and other requirement to protect life, property and the Delta ecosystem and water supply system (Goal 6).

**SB 2 7x (Cogdill)** authorizes issuance of general obligation bonds in the amount of \$11.1 billion. The bill includes these broad allocations (then sub allocated by program and geography):

Drought relief	\$455,000,000
Water supply reliability	\$1,050,000,000
Delta sustainability	\$2,250,000,000
Statewide water system operational improvement	\$3,000,000,000
Conservation and watershed protection	\$1,785,000,000
Groundwater protection and water quality	\$1,000,000,000
Water recycling program	\$1,000,000,000

This bill includes language restricting eligibility to bond funds to districts complying with water management plan requirements.

**SB 6 7x (Steinberg and Pavley)** focuses on groundwater (goal 4) an area where California currently lacks information required to make effective policy and lags all other western states in the reporting and monitoring of ground water use. The bill establishes a program in the Department of Water Resources to work with local water districts to establish ground water monitoring and includes language making urban and agricultural water suppliers ineligible for a water grant or loan administered by the state unless complying with provisions of the act.

**SB 7 7x (Steinberg)** requires the state to achieve a 20% reduction in urban per capita water use by December 31, 2020 (goal 4). Incremental progress is required of at least 10 % reduction by December 31, 2015. Agricultural water suppliers are required to implement efficient water management practices. Standardized reporting will be required and, with some exceptions, urban and agricultural

water suppliers would be ineligible for state water grants or loans unless they comply with the bill's water conservation requirements.

**SB 8 7x (Steinberg)** strengthens current law which requires the report of water diversion and use (goal 4), adding penalties for failure to report and removing some exemptions from report requirements. The bill also continuously appropriates \$3,750,000 annually from fee revenue to fund new permanent water right enforcement positions, a significant change protecting the integrity of the water rights system (goals 1, 3 and 4)

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The Delta Vision Foundation is the successor to the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force, the independent body established under Governor's Executive Order S-17-06. The Blue Ribbon Task Force held over 30 days of public meetings over two years, and involved hundreds of stakeholders, scientists and members of the public in its processes. It issued *Our Vision for the California Delta* (2007) and the *Delta Vision Strategic Plan* (2008). The Delta Vision Committee (cabinet officers) issued its *Delta Vision Committee Implementation Report* (2008) supporting almost all of those recommendations.

The goal of the Delta Vision Foundation is to maintain the visibility and viability of final recommendations of the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force, and encourage the public policy process to utilize those recommendations. The Foundation issues reports and participates in policy processes, but takes no formal position on legislation. The Foundation provides information to help policy makers act to restore the Delta and provide a more reliable water supply for California.