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2012 Delta Vision Foundation Report Card Assigns Tough Grades

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By Sunne Wright McPeak, President of the Delta Vision Foundation and Charles Gardiner, Executive Director



State decision makers are making inroads on planning, but they are lagging on implementation of solutions to fix the beleaguered Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The 2012 Delta

Vision Report Card, released yesterday by the Delta Vision Foundation, emphasizes that although the various sectors of state government are working hard and with good intentions, progress is slow in coming.

This annual evaluation assigns letter grades to the Governor's Administration, State and Federal Agencies, the Legislature, and on stakeholder cooperation. Grades reflect progress on implementing the actions recommended in the 2008 Delta Vision Strategic Plan, as well as results in achieving the Two Co-Equal Goals of (1) restoring the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta ecosystem and (2) ensuring a reliable water supply for California. The Strategic Plan described a set of integrated, linked actions to address long-standing problems and conflicts in the Delta.

While those responsible for overall policy direction for the State's water, environmental, and Delta issues did not fare as well as in last year's annual evaluation, some state agencies, including the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy and the State Water Resources Control Board, were lauded for advances in leadership, management strategy, and coordination. The Report Card evaluated implementing agencies for their leadership, strategic direction, coordination, results, and accountability.

The Delta Vision Foundation gives credit for effort. However, the continued urgency of conditions in the Delta and precarious statewide water supply stability demand action. The Delta ecosystem and water supply reliability remain at critical risk of failure, and the State must demonstrate more leadership, action, and implementation in the immediate future.

The Report Card is based on information gathered from elected officials' staff, agency executives and staff, stakeholders, and the public. It provides a broad assessment of actions and organizations, to lay out the opportunities and barriers for achieving the Two Co-Equal Goals. The Report Card also includes recommendations for action and improvement to accelerate implementation and ensure that strategies and actions are comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated.

This year's grades were based on a number of parameters, with particular emphasis on leadership, management, coordination, and accountability. While the assessment recognizes that budget constraints and the business of running the world's eighth largest economy have hindered progress, there is no time to waste in fixing the Delta. The State is not doing enough, fast enough.

The status of the Two Co-Equal Goals remains critical; the ecosystem remains at critical risk of losing species and habitat in the Delta, and water supply reliability remains at critical risk of supply disruption or shortages. Since the Delta Vision Strategic Plan was issued in 2008, there have been few significant actions implemented that reduce these risks and advance the Two Co-Equal Goals. Implementation of near-term actions has stalled, in part due to attention on long-term planning.

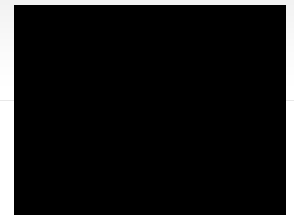
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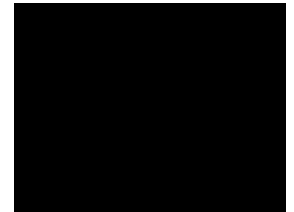
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State agencies, federal agencies, and stakeholders continue to work earnestly to plan and implement the legislative requirements. However, additional leadership and direction is needed at all levels to ensure that planning and actions are linked and integrated through policies, commitments, assurances, and requirements.

This year's Report Card underscores the urgency for action and implementation. This sense of urgency needs to be re-energized by the State of California Administration and Legislature. The progress of and accountability for implementation of solutions for the Delta have been inadequate, particularly for the near-term actions identified in the Delta Vision Strategic Plan, to protect and secure the existing water supply infrastructure, prepare for emergency response in the Delta, and begin ecosystem improvements.

The recommendations in the 2012 Delta Vision Report Card will take time to implement, but there is no time to waste in laying the groundwork. In order to ensure that California will have a healthy Delta and enough water in the future, the State needs to take action now.

The full Report Card can be viewed at <http://www.deltavisionfoundation.org/>, and the public may comment on the results until June 20. Final results and recommendations will be published by July 1.

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*The Delta Vision Foundation was established by former members of the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force. The mission of the Delta Vision Foundation is: (1) Restore the Delta Ecosystem; and (2) Ensure Water Supply Reliability. The Delta Vision Foundation monitors, evaluates, and provides information to government officials, policymakers, and the public about implementing the Delta Vision Strategic Plan recommendations as a set of integrated and linked actions. With support from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, the Delta Vision Foundation issues an annual Delta Vision Report Card and participates in policy processes, but takes no formal position on legislation.*

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