

# AB 39 (Huffman) Delta Vision Implementation Plan Fact Sheet

## IN BRIEF

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AB 39 requires the Delta Stewardship Council to develop a new Delta Plan, including incorporation of the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan, to implement the Delta Vision Strategic Plan by January 1, 2011.

## THE ISSUE

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For several years, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta has suffered multiple crises – ecosystem, water supply, levee stability, water quality, policy, program, and litigation. These Delta crises have led to a broad-ranging debate about how to resolve the crises, while providing for a reliable water supply and healthy Delta ecosystem.

## BACKGROUND

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Through this enduring Delta crisis, the Legislature and the Governor initiated, in 2006, a process to develop a new long-term vision for the Delta. The Governor created a Delta Vision Blue-Ribbon Task Force, which produced an October 2008 "Delta Vision Strategic Plan." This comprehensive Strategic Plan provides a broad framework for action in the Delta, with numerous recommendations requiring action by the Legislature. At the same time, agencies and stakeholders have been developing a Bay-Delta Conservation Plan for ecosystem restoration and water supply reliability.

## EXISTING LAW

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Existing law requires the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency to develop a strategic plan for the Delta, and authorizes state agencies to implement projects, under the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, that address ecosystem, water supply, water quality and levee system integrity. The Natural Community Conservation Act allows development of a multi-species conservation plan that would provide permits to "take" species listed under the state Endangered Species Act.

## THE BILL

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This bill fundamentally redirects the future of the Delta – our most important estuary ecosystem and the heart of California's water supply system. It changes course with a new Delta Plan that would include a "Natural Community Conservation Plan" in the now-developing Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP).

The newly created "Delta Stewardship Council" (Council) would take charge of developing the new Delta Plan, which would reflect the seven goals of the Delta Vision Task Force's Strategic Plan:

- 1) Promote co-equal goals of restoring the Delta ecosystem and creating a more reliable water supply.
- 2) Protect the 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.
- 5) Improve existing water conveyance system and expand statewide storage, to achieve co-equal goals.
- 6) Reduce risks to people, property, and state interests in the Delta with emergency preparedness, appropriate land uses, and strategic levee investments.
- 7) Use new governance structure with science and authority/accountability to achieve coequal goals.

The Schwarzenegger Administration's effort to develop the BDCP under the federal and state Endangered Species Acts will play a key role – IF BDCP complies with the state's Natural Community Conservation Plan Act – the "gold standard" for conservation.

AB 39 takes the critical first step in redirecting the State's Delta policy toward the coequal goals of ecosystem restoration and a more reliable water supply. While promoting those goals, the bill imposes significant safeguards on the actions that State agencies pursue in coming years.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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