



Press Release

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SINGLE TUNNEL PROPOSAL FOR SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA FLAWED *Smaller Capacity Tunnel Would Result in 33 Percent Less Water and Less Reliability for California Water Agencies*

Sacramento, CA – A smaller, single tunnel underneath the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) would result in dramatically less water for California cities and farms while causing greater harm to endangered species, a [new review](#) by the State Water Contractors explains.

The single tunnel proposal was circulated by the Natural Resources Defense Council and other organizations at the end of January as an alternative to the twin-tunnels that have been proposed under state-federal Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). The twin-tunnels of BDCP would have a capacity of 9,000 cubic feet per second (cfs), while the single tunnel proposal calls for one tunnel with a capacity of only 3,000 cfs. The State Water Contractors believe that that this alternative proposal would reduce environmental benefits and reduce water supplies for 25 million Californians and farmers on millions of acres of land.

More than 30 public water agencies, organizations and business groups throughout the state have signed coalition [letters](#) opposing the alternative proposal because it would perpetuate the current degradation of the Delta while making water less reliable and more expensive throughout the state.

“There is no business case for the alternative proposal—it would mean spending billions of ratepayer dollars on a project that is riddled with reliability issues and would result in 33 percent less water,” said Terry Erlewine, general manager of the State Water Contractors. “Re-plumbing our state water system and protecting endangered species is imperative. It’s going to be a big investment, and we need to do it right the first time.”

The 9,000 cfs twin-tunnel system being analyzed under the BDCP offers several key elements that are critical for the state’s water managers:

- **BDCP seeks to restore water supplies while the alternative plan is asking water agencies to pay for a proposal that would result in a 33 percent reduction in supplies from traditional levels.**
- **The larger capacity, twin-tunnel system allows more water to be taken during high storm flows, so that diversions can be reduced during dry periods. The smaller, single tunnel forfeits the opportunity to capture more water in wet years.**

- **The two tunnels proposed by BDCP incorporate a back-up plan. If one tunnel is down for routine maintenance, the other can keep running. There is no back-up for the single tunnel.**
- **The smaller tunnel size of 3,000 cfs will force more water to be pumped at the existing water facilities in the ecologically sensitive South Delta. A small tunnel that forces more pumping in the South Delta will not achieve the goal of increased protection for Delta fish.**

“The most glaring hole in the alternative plan is that it neglects to consider how these water supply reductions will impact California agriculture,” added Erlewine. “Farms in the San Joaquin Valley do not have the local water supply opportunities afforded to our urban agencies—and the alternative plan overlooks that fact.”

The State Water Contractors comparison of the tunnel options is available [here](#). For more information on the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, please visit www.baydeltaconservationplan.com.

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The State Water Contractors is a statewide, non-profit association of 27 public agencies from Northern, Central and Southern California that purchase water under contract from the California State Water Project. Collectively the State Water Contractors deliver water to more than 25 million residents throughout the state and more than 750,000 acres of agricultural lands. For more information on the State Water Contractors, please visit www.swc.org.