

STATUS, TRENDS AND FACTORS  
AFFECTING  
SACRAMENTO/SAN JOAQUIN DELTA  
WATER SUPPLIES

PERSPECTIVE PAPERS

S. Jaeger

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**Issues Panel on  
"Reactions to State Water Resources Control Board Hearings"**

**Reactions of the Delta Tributary Agencies Committee  
presented by Roger K. Masuda**

**1988 Spring Conference of  
the Association of California Water Agencies**

**May 12, 1988  
San Diego, California**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE**

**DELTA TRIBUTARY AGENCIES COMMITTEE (DTAC)**

The State Water Resources Control Board's D-1485 proceedings did not involve upstream water rights holders. However, as a result of the Racanelli decision, the State Board's Bay-Delta proceedings pose a threat to long standing water rights held by water and irrigation districts upstream of the Delta in the Northeastern San Joaquin River Basin and in the Sacramento River Basin. The need for the formation of an organization uniting these water interests and coordinating their efforts in the Bay-Delta hearings was evident. The organizational effort was spearheaded by Ernest Geddes, Turlock ID's General Manager, and Joseph Marcotte, Modesto ID's Chief Executive Officer, with the assistance of William Gianelli, long-time water rights consultant to Turlock and Modesto.

During April 1987, organizational meetings attended by representatives from Turlock ID, Modesto ID, Oakdale ID, South San Joaquin ID, Nevada ID, Calaveras County WD, South Sutter WD, El Dorado ID, Merced ID, Placer County WA, Oroville Wyandotte ID, and other agencies were held at the Modesto ID main offices and at ACWA's office in Sacramento. The name "Delta Tributary Agencies Committee" was chosen as the organization's name. In May 1987, Eugene Bergeron, Oakdale ID's Manager, was elected chairman and James Chatigny, Nevada ID's Manager, was elected vice-chairman.

DTAC was formed to provide common representation, data gathering, and inter-agency communication, cooperation, and

coordination for the protection of the members' water rights and resources during the Bay-Delta hearings.

Organizationally, DTAC is run by a Coordinating Committee consisting of representatives from Oakdale ID, Nevada ID, Modesto ID, Turlock ID, Calaveras County WD, El Dorado ID, and the Minasian law office who represents a large number of Central Valley water agencies. Gary Conover, Modesto ID, is the DTAC Coordinator.

The following are the regular and associate members of DTAC:

Regular Members

Amador County Water Agency	Oakdale ID
Calaveras County Water District	Oroville-Wyandotte ID
Central California ID	Placer County Water Agency
El Dorado County Water Agency	South San Joaquin ID
El Dorado ID	South Sutter Water District
Glenn-Colusa ID	Turlock ID
Merced ID	Yolo County FC & WC Dist.
Modesto ID	Yuba County Water Agency
Nevada ID	

Associate Members

Anderson-Cottonwood ID	Firebaugh Canal Company
Biggs-West Gridley Water Dist.	Rameriz Water District
Browns Valley ID	Richvale ID
Butte Water District	San Luis Canal Company
Columbia Canal Company	Sutter Extension Water Dist.
Cordua ID	Western Canal Water District

The DTAC members are primarily suppliers of irrigation water, diverting over 5.1 million acre feet in 1985. Some members also supply water to meet a growing municipal and industrial demand in their service areas. The members' total water storage capacity in reservoirs which they own or have rights in approach 6 million acre feet.

During Phase I of the Bay-Delta hearings, the strategic objectives of DTAC were:

1. To present to the SWRCB a global perspective of the DTAC members' water needs and uses.
2. To defend the DTAC members' interests at the hearings.

3. To cooperate with and work with other water user groups, such as the State Water Contractors (SWC) and the Central Valley Project Water Association (CVPWA), to the maximum extent possible so long as not detrimental to the interests of any DTAC member.

4. To present a new, but scientifically well-grounded, perspective on the Central Valley salmon issue.

To achieve these objectives during the Phase I hearings,

1. James Chatigny, DTAC vice-chairman and Nevada ID Manager, and Robert Clark, Glenn-Colusa ID Manager, testified at the "Uses Upstream of the Delta" session in Redding on the water use, crop values, and the hydroelectric, storage, and recreational value of the reservoirs of the DTAC members. The purpose of the testimony was to emphasize that any reduction in the availability of water utilized by the DTAC members would jeopardize their long established beneficial uses of water within their areas of origin.

2. DTAC had at least one representative at each session of the Phase I hearings. DTAC was represented at the hearings by William Baber of the Minasian law office, Roger Masuda, Turlock ID attorney, Kevin O'Brien, Yuba County WA attorney, Noble Sprunger, El Dorado ID attorney, and William Johnston, Modesto ID water consultant. The DTAC hearing team also included Wilton Fryer, Oakdale ID, Terry Mayfield, Nevada ID, Dr. Alan Paterson, Turlock ID history consultant, and Dr. Emil Morhardt, Dr. Edward Cheslak, and Frank Ligon of EA Engineering, Turlock and Modesto's fishery consultants.

3. During the "Export Uses--Agriculture" session in Fresno, DTAC joined with CVPWA and SWC in presenting five expert witnesses on Central Valley irrigated agriculture--its structure, its great economic importance, the potential adverse socio-economic impacts from a reduction of water to irrigated agriculture, and its water use and the actual limited potential for additional water savings through agricultural water conservation. DTAC's Redding testimony was presented in conjunction with the Sacramento River Water Contractors Association. DTAC also participated in joint planning meetings with representatives of the State and Federal water projects and their water users.

4. DTAC emphasized the importance of taking a system-wide approach to the Central Valley salmon issue and that the state and federal fishery agencies were wrong in assuming that flow is the only factor determining salmon abundance and the health of the salmon fishery. During the "Chinook Salmon" session, EA

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Engineering presented the San Joaquin Tributaries Chinook Salmon Population Model which it developed for Turlock and Modesto. The model is a complex simulation model of the San Joaquin tributaries, the Delta, and the ocean which integrates and analyzes the key factors which act, independently or interactively, to determine the abundance of San Joaquin chinook salmon. The EA model is a working model. It is a useful tool to evaluate the logical consequences of a proposed fishery or water management alternative within the context of the highly complex and interactive chinook salmon system.

In using state and federal fishery agency inputs, the model found that the most significant factor affecting salmon abundance was ocean harvest, then export pumping mortality, and to a lesser degree export pumping rate and flow in the San Joaquin tributaries and through the Delta. A simulation model can assess the fish mortality directly caused by the export pumps separately from the fish mortality associated with the rate water is pumped through the export pumps. The model thus indicates that actions which would decrease the salmon ocean harvest rate or facilities which would decrease fish mortality at the export pumps would be the most effective in increasing the Central Valley salmon population in the long run.

DTAC intends to participate in Phases II and III of the Bay-Delta hearings. Since the conclusion of the Phase I hearings, DTAC has actively participated in the Five-Agency Salmon Working Group.

William Ketscher

For more information about DTAC, you may contact ~~Gary Conover~~, DTAC Coordinator, Modesto ID, P.O. Box 4060, Modesto, CA 95352, (209) 578-1212, or Roger Masuda at the above Turlock address and telephone number.

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