



NEWS RELEASE

Association of California Water Agencies

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATEMENT BY STEPHEN K. HALL, ACWA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ON THE STATE / FEDERAL AGREEMENT ON BAY-DELTA STANDARDS

"We all knew we needed standards in the Delta. This agreement gives us standards that protect the Delta. We all knew that water users needed more certainty. This agreement gives water users much greater certainty of an adequate water supply. We all knew we needed to somehow craft a working agreement despite the constraint of the Endangered Species Act. This agreement provides for that."

Salient Points About the Agreement:

- It is the CUWA-AG proposal, with some minor modifications. It requires essentially the same water as their proposal.
- It returns decisions about California water to the state, where they belong.
- It provides enough protection for fish to assure that conditions in the Delta will not contribute to the listing of any new fish for at least three years.
- It provides much needed flexibility to the Endangered Species Act, so both fish and the California economy can be protected.
- It means that we will not turn the state's water supply off and on based on shaky biology. Instead, we will have the kind of open and honest decision making about water project operation that Californians need and deserve.
- All water required from the Central Valley Project under this Agreement will be credited toward the CVP's environmental obligations under the Central Valley Project Improvement Act.

- The Agreement provides that U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards will soon be withdrawn.
- It assures that allocation of water costs will be carried out by the State Water Resources Control Board under California water law.

About the Water Users:

"The water users have taken an historic step in putting a bold, innovative proposal on the table. That proposal has become the centerpiece of the Bay-Delta standards and the foundation on which a long-term solution for the Delta will be built. By dedicating water up front in return for some short term relief from the ESA, the water users have taken a tremendous gamble that we could make the Delta work both for the environment and for people. This agreement looks like proof that the gamble paid off."

About the Endangered Species Act:

"This is a good agreement, but it is not the end of our struggle over the Delta. This gives us enough time to work on a long-term, comprehensive plan for the Delta and it gives us some short term relief from the problems of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). What this agreement represents is a test for the agencies that administer the ESA. If they cannot use this agreement to protect species in a more reasonable way, it will be proof positive that there is no good way to administer this law."

The Governor:

"We owe Governor Wilson a debt of gratitude. When he withdrew Decision 1630, he had the vision to see that Delta standards could not work without an agreement like this and had the courage to stand by his principles."

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