

MEMORANDUM

To: The Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force

From: Elizabeth Patterson, DV Staff-CA Department of Water Resources
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Subject: Inventory of Submitted External Alternative Visions

Date: August 29, 2007

This memorandum describes the purpose and method used for the Inventory Document Item #6 in the Task Force binder.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Inventory is to identify the policies in each of the Alternative Visions and to organize them under the categories of the Delta Vision Executive Order (S-17-06): the environment, land use, transportation, utilities, water supply and quality, recreation, flood risk, emergency response, local and state economies, governance and strategic financing. Cross-cutting policies have been added as well.

METHOD

The policies are worded, for the most part, as written in the original alternatives with text changes made to consolidate, or to make grammatical adjustments other than editing. The policies are intended to represent faithfully the submittals. To the extent this is not achieved, corrections will be made for the record.

This Inventory could be used to augment the proposed Stakeholder Visions. The inventory helps in shaping guiding principles for the future Delta Vision Plan and Strategy.

SUMMARIES

Below are brief descriptive summaries of each of the Alternative Visions.

Allied Fishing

Allied Fishing's vision calls for a holistic watershed approach to recover and restore the environmentally and economically important Delta fisheries to their historical abundance. This vision calls for a reduction in exports; regional water self-sufficiency based largely on water conservation; enforcement of water quality standards; use of the conveyance and flow regime recommended in the "Seven Environmental Organizations" vision (below); a comprehensive solution to predation, entrainment and non-native invasive species; a single Delta oversight group; and beneficiary pays.

Contra Costa Council

The Council's vision submittal is principles-based focused on the Delta, but identifies management principles that would affect the Delta's watershed and statewide water management. Key principles of the vision include: protect public health and safety, including emergency response planning; ensure a water supply for California while reducing conflict between fish and water operations; protect infrastructure and levees; target funding to critical projects; develop management flexibility through needed infrastructure such as storage; enhance Delta watershed terrestrial and aquatic habitats; develop equitable cost-sharing; identify an independent governmental body with authority; and, phased implementation.

Delta Corridors

This is a Delta-based vision with an engineered and South Delta focus. The overriding purpose of this vision is to restore natural functions of the river-estuary while maintaining water supply exports, and eliminating all entrainment of San Joaquin River fish. The primary strategy of this vision is to modify channels and use gates, barriers, screens and reinforced levees on Old and Middle Rivers to separate water supply and habitat corridors, thereby allowing greater salinity fluctuations at Franks Tract and reduced salinity at in- and south-of-Delta export pumps.

Environmental Justice Coalition for Water

The Coalition's vision focuses on a flexible governance approach and structure that will provide full opportunity for public review of, and participation in Delta decisions. The vision is regionally based within the context of a comprehensive watershed management approach recognizing the effects of upstream water operations and water quality. The vision pays particular attention to achieving a sustainable Delta while protecting public health with respect to drinking water and fish consumption. This vision is also calls for decisions (e.g., land use and emergency response) that take into account impacts on low-income homeowners and disadvantaged residents within the Delta.

Restore the Delta

This vision embraces the Regional Self-Sufficiency vision (below) that focuses on water development, floodplain and groundwater storage, floodplain management, and water use reduction in the Delta's larger watershed to reduce exports from the Delta and flooding pressures on Delta levees. Reduced exports would help manage salinity, maintain water quality and improve fisheries. The vision calls for studies on a flexible, opportunistic conveyance and a single governing entity with strong in-Delta representation.

Peer Swan

This vision is Delta-focused and proposes conjunctive use of the Sacramento Ship Channel and a new water (pipeline-based) conveyance corridor that skirts the western edge of the Delta. The vision also focuses on consolidating and securing infrastructure, transportation and utility corridors; would phase out farming and acquire islands in the central and west Delta to reduce subsidence, levee maintenance liability and costs;

identify and protect urban and economic development nodes; and, return as much of the Delta as feasible to a natural condition.

The Seven Environmental Organizations¹

This vision takes an integrated, holistic watershed and water management approach with its primary objective to improve the Delta's ecosystem. Improving water quality and flood management, maintaining agriculture and promoting recreation/tourism are goals, as well. The vision calls for a mosaic of habitats, including habitat corridors, altered flow conditions, floodplain corridors and bypasses. Reducing exports by finding alternative water supplies for exporters is a priority of this vision. This vision proposes an experimental approach to conveyance with reversibility and ecologically compatible options tried first. The vision proposes a Delta Conservation and Development Commission, and beneficiary pays approach to finance..

Regional Self-Sufficiency

This vision is a comprehensive watershed approach that proposes to reduce dependence on the Delta's water by increasing regional water self-sufficiency. The vision calls for greater water development and storage outside of the Delta, including floodplain and groundwater storage. A Central Valley Flood Management Plan would be developed to protect floodplains and guide land-use. A goal is to restore Delta outflow to return the seawater mixing zone to the Suisun Bay. Stronger levees and ring levees would protect infrastructure, legacy communities and roads. Key to implementing the vision is a plan that addresses all the functions of the Delta, anticipates change, and uses the whole of the watershed for solutions.

¹ The Bay Institute, Natural Heritage Institute, Natural Resources Defense Council, The Nature Conservancy, Planning and Conservation League, California Water Impact Network, and Environmental Defense.