



CONTRA COSTA COUNCIL DELTA VISION STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is in crisis. The Delta's levee system is fragile and vulnerable to failure from earthquake, floods and other causes. Continued sinking of Delta islands, as well as sea level rise and increased severity of flooding as a result of global warming, pose longer term threats. The decline of fisheries and endangered species indicate the declining health of the estuary. All of these factors threaten the access of millions of Californians to a reliable supply of high quality water.

The Contra Costa Council believes that any solution developed through the state's Delta Vision process must take a comprehensive view of the Delta and consider its numerous assets, as outlined below. Accordingly, the following principles, taken collectively, will guide the Council's advocacy efforts on any proposed actions regarding the Delta.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta is of vital importance to northern California and the state as a whole in many ways:

- It influences the physical, social, economic and cultural fabric of the Delta region, including Contra Costa, Alameda, Solano, Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Yolo counties.
- It defines our shoreline and serves numerous municipal and industrial intakes.
- It is an essential resource for the State of California. It is home to more than 500,000 people, provides habitat to 700 native species, and contains multiple strategic highways, pipelines, utility distribution systems, railroads and deep-water ports serving state and national interests.
- It delivers water to the homes of more than 25 million Californians, agriculture and businesses and supports a significant recreation industry and fisheries.
- Its water supply and other Delta services support \$400 billion in economic activity.

Solutions/Actions must meet the following criteria:

Protect public health and safety (death, illness or injury), including the public's supply of quality drinking water, against levee failures through:

- A coordinated emergency response program
- Flood management
- Flood routing
- Protective land-use policies
- A program to retrofit and strengthen strategic elements of the existing levee system

Provide a reliable supply of high quality water for California:

- Ensure that the water supply is safe, clean and of high quality to meet the needs of California's residents, farms, commerce and recreation
- Provide improvements to fisheries
- Ensure the quality of the drinking water derived from the Delta and used as part of the drinking water supply
- Ensure that water supplies derived from the Delta, including water supplies used or conveyed through the Delta, are reliable by making investments in the Delta that reduce the conflict between fish and water project operations such as fish screens at export facilities and modification to Delta channels that reduce fish densities near water diversion facilities
- Ensure that water supplies derived from the Delta are minimally affected by catastrophic levee failures through a coordinated emergency response program:
 - Invest in critical western and central Delta levees necessary to protect beneficial uses and resources of the Delta
 - Ensure Propositions 84 and 1E bond funding goes to improving Delta levees, focusing on critical levees that protect water quality and other Delta levees that protect public health and safety
 - Strategic stockpiling of emergency repair materials
 - Develop infrastructure, such as surface and groundwater storage that increases the ability to manage the Delta with greater flexibility
- Encourage water use efficiency by **all** users of Delta water through conservation and recycling and other cost-effective means to reduce reliance on the Delta

Protect infrastructure in the Delta

- Protect critical infrastructure in the Delta, including highways, pipelines, utility distribution systems, railroads and deep water ports that serve the interests of the state by taking actions to avoid catastrophic levee failure
- Coordinate strategic infrastructure improvements with other actions, such as levee repair, to provide cost-effective use of public funds for Delta protection

Protect economic assets of the Delta:

- Protect the local, regional and state economic vitality by taking steps outlined above to avoid catastrophic failure of Delta levees

- Recognize the importance of direct and indirect economic impacts of catastrophic Delta levee failures, including increased costs of materials and services associated with levee repairs and emergency response
- Protect and enhance recreation and tourism opportunities, including boating, hunting and fishing that enhance our quality of life

Protect the environmental health of the estuary:

- Improve and enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitats and improve ecological functions in the Bay Delta watersheds to support sustainable native populations of plant, aquatic and terrestrial species
- Actions and remedies must be based on sound science

Develop a regulatory framework that will protect ecosystem health, water quality and reliability

- Identify an independent governmental body with the legal authority and accountability to regulate and assure applicable water quality and environmental standards are met in the Delta. Other stakeholders, including appropriate state and federal agencies, must be participants and held accountable for implementing needed actions.
- Develop a regulatory framework and needed infrastructure, such as storage, to provide for seasonal fresh water flows through the Delta into San Francisco Bay that will protect ecosystem health and water quality and improve the ability to manage the Delta with greater flexibility.
- Base actions on sound scientific principles
- Develop an equitable cost-sharing formula to fund needed projects and actions
- Implement critical initial projects immediately with available funding, while longer-term actions are being considered.



A SUMMARY VISION FOR THE DELTA

prepared by the

CONTRA COSTA COUNCIL

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The Northern California triangular region, known as the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, between Sacramento, Stockton and the Carquinez Strait is a natural water resource that is important to the quality of life of millions of people as well as California's economy. Our vision for the region's future includes providing opportunities for a vital regional, state and national economy and supporting a sustainable aquatic and terrestrial environment that provides a healthy habitat for fish and other wildlife. A strategic action plan for Delta levees is needed to protect essential public services, including water supply, transportation, navigation, housing and public utilities. Planning for the Delta must consider varied interests, including water supply and quality, recreation, agriculture, public entities, industry, and the natural environment and other interests. It is incumbent on all generations to recognize and protect natural, economic and recreational assets of the Delta for future generations. A regulatory framework must be established that protects ecosystem health, water quality and reliability and produces prompt decisions and action. Attempting to solve one problem without consideration of other assets must be avoided. Decisions regarding the Delta must recognize the need to protect this vital natural and state resource for all concerned with the necessary level of public investment, such that current and future generations will benefit from the Delta as a sustainable resource for the people of California.