

Chapter Three

Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources: State Water Policy Attachment

Background

As the nation's most populous state, California faces many complicated and compelling water resource issues. The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) recognizes the complexities of water use and distribution throughout the state and has reiterated its position on this issue over the years through various policy statements, including, but not limited to support for statutory protection of counties of origin and watershed areas, support for existing water rights, the need for new and expanded water resources, and the need for local water conservation efforts. This policy attachment is consistent with other existing CSAC policy guidelines concerning water, land use, agriculture, forestry, climate change and flood protection.

Introduction

CSAC acknowledges the reliance of counties on the Delta as a water delivery system, and recognizes the urgency with which all of the Delta partners, including the State must act to resolve and fund infrastructure, environmental and supply issues.

Section 1: Water Conveyance

Decisions regarding the Delta necessitate the inclusion of policy direction in CSAC's platform to ensure consideration of county interests. These proposed policies also build upon CSAC's existing policy that recognizes the Delta as a critical region of statewide importance encompassing vital water, transportation, energy, agriculture and economic interests. The proposed policies will be relied upon by CSAC staff in conjunction with existing CSAC policy in developing recommendations regarding the State Water Plan, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, and the California Water Fix Project. CSAC believes that any proposed Delta solutions be implemented in a manner that:

- Respects the affected counties' land use authority, revenues, public health and safety, economic development, water rights, and agricultural viability.
- Promotes recreation and environmental protection.
- Ensures Delta counties' status as voting members of any proposed Delta governance structure.

- Improves flood protection for delta residents, property, and infrastructure.
- Improves and protects the Delta ecosystem, water quality, flows and supply.
- Ensures consistency with affected counties adopted policies and plans.
- Secures financial support for flood management, improved emergency response, preservation of agriculture, protection of water resources, and enhancement and restoration of habitat.
- Accords special recognition, and advances the economic vitality of “heritage” or “legacy” communities in the Delta.
- Demonstrates a clearly evidenced public benefit to any proposed changes to the boundaries of the Delta.
- Supports development of adequate water supply for the south, utilizing the concept of "Regional Self Sufficiency" whereby each region maximizes conservation and recycled water use, implements storage (surface and groundwater) and considers desalination, as necessary.