

Southern California Leadership Council

Sustainable Water Supplies 2008 Position Summary

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- Southern California's main water agency, the Metropolitan Water District (MWD), imports water from the Colorado River and the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. The City of Los Angeles independently imports water from the Owens River Valley. All three sources are under strain from population growth, climate change and the need for environmental restoration and preservation. Local resources provide up to forty percent of the region's water. However, sustainable groundwater programs depend on imported supplies to supplement natural replenishment.
- Southern California must pursue a diverse portfolio of self-help initiatives to secure reliable water supplies, including water conservation and reuse; more underground storage and replenishment; water banking, displacement and exchanges; and even desalination. Reduced reliance on imported water is key to Southern California's future.
- One of the most immediate threats to Southern California's water supply, and indeed, the water supply of the East Bay, Silicon Valley, the San Joaquin Valley and the Central Coast is the worsening environmental condition of the Delta. This is the water source for half the nation's fruits and vegetables and a key supply for 23 million residents throughout the state. We support the emerging consensus of the Delta Vision and Bay Delta Conservation Plan processes that calls for a long-term comprehensive plan to restore the Delta ecosystem, in part by separating it from the water delivery system. The commitment to protecting and restoring the Delta ecosystem is in the interests of the entire state.
- Southern California should support state actions this year that address short-term needs and that set the stage for the historic changes necessary in the Delta and for water management statewide:
 - An executive order by the governor that provides the overall framework for water actions for the year. The order would direct the initiation of feasibility studies of new conveyance options in the Delta in order to restore natural flow patterns in the estuary by isolating the effects of water deliveries.
 - The completion of feasibility studies of surface storage options identified in the Cal-Fed Record of Decision.
 - The implementation of emergency preparedness efforts in the Delta using existing bond funds to respond to seismic and flood events.

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- The creation, via legislation, of a new entity to undertake habitat restoration in the Delta and to direct the use of the appropriate state and federal funds towards improving Delta habitat.
- The prudent expenditure of existing bond funds (more than \$8 billion in unspent monies exist in various water-related measures). Funds should not be diverted to address the state's budget deficit; Delta levee improvements should be compatible, and not conflict with, likely future management changes in the estuary.
- The financial and political support of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and its stakeholder process to devise a future Delta water system and ecosystem strategy that is in compliance with environmental laws.
- State bond funding to support sustainable, local self-help water supply projects should be subject to a local matching funds requirement, environmental review and cost-benefit analysis.
- Any reservoir projects should be subject to the same requirements for local matching funds from beneficial users, including environmental review and cost-benefit analysis.
- Support for public-private partnerships that seek to effectively leverage State bond funding, local resources and private sector investment towards improvement of California's water infrastructure.

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