

Californians for a Fair Water Policy Rally, 13 December 2013.

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So, on this Friday the 13th the BDCP public comment period begins. They give us 40,123 pages of documents – that’s a nine-foot high stack containing 20% more pages than the 32 volumes of the last printed edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica. We’re asked to provide comments within 85 working days – that’s 473 pages a day. You can purchase a printed copy for only \$3,000.

Turn the pages and you’ll discover what William Burroughs meant when he observed that, “a paranoid schizophrenic is simply someone who’s discovered what’s going on.”

Since the State Water Project began exporting water in 1967:

1. Water exports have increased by more than 60%; outflow to the Bay has declined by more than 40%.
2. The flow and water quality standards protecting the Delta have been violated hundreds of times, without a single enforcement action taken.
3. The water code, area of origin and watershed protection statutes have been ignored.

It’s not surprising that the Delta’s biological tapestry is hemorrhaging.

1. Populations of Delta smelt are down 98.9%, striped bass 99.6%, longfin smelt 99.7%, American shad 89.1%, threadfin shad 98.1% and splittail down 99.4%.
2. Anadromous fisheries have experienced similar declines. For example, wild steelhead and winter-run salmon are down 91.7% and 95.5%, respectively.

Fisheries that evolved over millennia have been destroyed by greed in mere decades.

And now, the architects of this biological meltdown present us with a 40,000 page omelet of distortion, junk science, half-truths and outright lies designed to create an artificial reality that you can restore an estuary disintegrating from a lack of freshwater flow by stealing more water from it.

They propose to build the tunnels now and decide how to operate them later. That’s not restoration; that’s a death sentence for one of the world’s great estuaries.

What you won’t find in these 40,000 pages, are answers to how much water the Delta needs, how much water will be exported, who has the legal rights to the water or who is going to pay for this 50 billion dollar scheme.

Nor, will you find responses to:

1. Federal agencies and independent scientists who have scathingly criticized the draft versions of this scheme as biased, flawed, unsupported and highly speculative; that it will lead to species extinction.
2. The State Water Board's observations that the tunnels will provide less water than presently exported if adequate fishery protection measures are established.
3. Independent economists who have ridiculed the economic assessment and pointed out the huge financial risks. It will saddle the public with vast debt, undermine regional water self-sufficiency and the water will be too expensive for farmers, unless heavily subsidized by urban ratepayers.

We will not allow our fisheries, farms, communities and future prosperity to be sacrificed to enrich a south valley industrial agriculture, that comprises 3 tenths of 1% of our state economy, and is predicated upon embezzled water, massive public subsidizes, unrestricted pollution and subsistence wages.

We'll fight this abominable scheme through the administrative halls, the courtrooms and the ballot box.

If necessary, we'll fight on the channels and sloughs and on the levees and through the fields - to the very gates of hell.

We shall never surrender our Delta.