



Press Release

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For Immediate Release

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Gov. Brown Rejects 21st Century Solutions: Returns to the Failures of the Dam Building Era

Water Bond NOT "Tunnels Neutral" - Public Trust Doctrine Undermined

Today, the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance assailed Governor Brown's Water Bond as a poster-child of pork barrel politics, a rejection of 21st Century solutions and a return to the failures of the Dam Building era. Contrary to claims by the architects of the Water Bond, it represents an enormous underground subsidy for BDCP's Delta tunnels.

It provides \$2.7 billion for new, marginal, river-damaging, low yield dams benefiting special interests that will provide little "new" water and would not be economically viable except for lavish public subsidies. To persuade the dam lobby to support the Bond, the legislature increased funding for dam construction by slashing funds allocated to recycling by more than 44% from the previous version of the Bond.

Recycling projects provide far more "new" water at less cost while providing more jobs than surface storage projects. And recycling projects would help alleviate present shortages by creating "new" water within a few years in contrast to the decades required to design and build new dams. This Bond does little to address near-term needs.

CSPA Executive Director, Bill Jennings, observed, "Legislative sausage-making is always messy but last minute sausage making ends up making baloney and this Bond is a subsidized truck load of pork baloney." Jennings added, "The Governor inexplicably turned his back on 21st Century demand side strategies to embrace 19th Century supply side approaches that have brought us to the present crisis. California deserves better."

Under existing regulations, purchased water upstream becomes "abandoned" as it enters the Delta and thereby is "available" for export through the tunnels to southern California. Public purchases of water represent an enormous subsidy for special interests and supporters of the Delta tunnels.

Delta tunnel proponents have been insisting upon public funds to purchase water to supplement exports because their studies demonstrate that the tunnels are not economically feasible if not supplemented by huge public water purchases. The Bond undermines public trust doctrine by providing hundreds of millions of dollars to purchase

water for fish and water quality, ignoring existing requirements that public trust beneficial uses of water quality and fisheries must be protected as a precondition for diversion of water for consumptive purposes.

The Bond provides millions of dollars for new habitat in the Delta, ignoring the fact that the vast majority of existing habitat restoration projects in the 223,000 acres of present conservation lands in the Delta have failed because of the massive diversion of water that is a necessary prerequisite for functional, productive aquatic habitat that benefits native species.

Habitat restoration to restore fisheries to pre-project conditions is a legally mandated mitigation requirement of the export projects. Those who directly benefit from the export of Delta water should be responsible for the costs. Habitat restoration should not be dependent on vast public subsidies. Any publically funded habitat projects in the Delta relieve the export projects from their responsibility of mitigating project impacts. Consequently, publically funded habitat projects, like publically funded water purchases, are not “tunnel neutral.”

The California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public benefit conservation and research organization established in 1983 for the purpose of conserving, restoring, and enhancing the state's water quality, wildlife and fishery resources and their aquatic ecosystems and associated riparian habitats. www.calsport.org