



June 2, 2025

The Honorable Mike McGuire President Pro-Tempore California State Senate

The Honorable Robert Rivas Speaker of the Assembly California State Assembly

The Honorable Scott Wiener, Chair Senate Budget Committee California State Senate

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel, Chair Assembly Budget Committee California State Assembly

The Honorable Ben Allen, Chair Senate Budget Subcommittee 2 California State Senate

The Honorable Steve Bennett, Chair Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3 California State Assembly

The Honorable Monique Limon, Chair Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee California State Senate

The Honorable Diane Papan Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee California State Assembly

The Honorable Catherine Blakespear, Chair Senate Environmental Quality Committee California State Senate

The Honorable Isaac Bryan, Chair Assembly Natural Resources Committee California State Assembly

Re: Opposition to Governor's Budget Trailer Bill Clearing Way for the Controversial Delta Tunnel

Dear President Pro-Tempore McGuire, Speaker Rivas, Senators Wiener, Allen, Limon, Assemblymembers Gabriel, Bennett, Papan, and Assemblymember Bryan:

The undersigned Cities and local organizations strongly oppose the Administration's proposal related to the Delta Conveyance Project (DCP or Delta Tunnel) included as part of his May Budget Revision.

The proposal, unrelated to state budgeting policy and inappropriately suggested for inclusion in a state spending plan, would change several, separate parts of state law to benefit only a portion of California, to the detriment of Californians north of the Delta.

First, the trailer bill will trammel on the critical environmental protections provided through the State Water Board's permitting process, by eliminating rules and procedures that could slow down or stop the tunnel. After Department of Water Resources lost in court on their financing plan for the tunnel, the proposal also attacks case law by changing state law that to allow the project to issue an unlimited amount of bonds to pay for the tunnel, to be repaid by participating public water agencies – meaning taxpayers will be footing the bill for this project no matter how expensive it becomes. Third, it undermines the ability of our five counties to defend our communities, constituents and ecosystems in Court by treating this 39-foot diameter, 40-mile-long tunnel like a four-block NBA basketball arena. The difference here is that every city and county affected by this project opposes it, unlike small, local projects that have the support of the local agency and the community. And finally, this proposal empowers the project proponents to more easily and forcibly acquire land from Delta landowners, furthering the harm to our communities' legacy farmers and ranchers. None of these provisions deserve support and certainly not in a budget bill that runs on a truncated process with little time for public review, scrutiny and feedback.

Dating back to 2009, the Legislature and Administration have consistently and deliberately avoided provisions that facilitate highly controversial and extraordinarily expensive isolated conveyance projects in the Delta (currently called the Delta Conveyance Project) in final versions of legislation. This has been the case, for example, with proposed resources bonds and exemptions from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) that would facilitate new Delta conveyance. When the Governor last tried this type of surprise legislative push in 2023, the Legislature pushed back on the inclusion of such a divisive and expensive project. We are looking once again to your leadership in protecting the Delta as a place and preserving the existing process through which the project proponents must pass.

The Legislature's sterling track record on this issue has been established through thoughtful and decisive actions. Changing existing laws for the explicit benefit of this highly controversial project would pick "winners and losers" between those living within and near the Delta and those that primarily seek to export more water from massive new water diversions on the Sacramento River in the northern Delta with a capacity to take 6,000 cubic feet of water per second. Disadvantaged and culturally significant communities in the Delta would be gravely and permanently damaged should the project – which spans three counties and would take an estimated 14 years to construct – move forward. The inclusion of the Delta Tunnel in May Revision is contrary to the policies the administration and Legislature have espoused in recent years and is a breach of trust and understanding that has existed for nearly a decade and a half.

For those legislators representing areas that may receive water through this proposal tunnel, we urge you to consider the fact that the tunnel will not lead to additional water storage. There is no new water created or made available through the tunnel. A generous estimate suggests the potential for a 10-15% increase in water supplies as a result of reduced carriage water requirements through the Delta, among other factors, and there is no limit on how much the project can cost, and those who would receive this water must pay for it, beginning more than a decade before it could deliver any water.

For these reasons, we urge you to reject the Governor's trailer bill proposals when they come before you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Bobbie Singh-Allen, Mayor
City of Elk Grove



Cameron Bregman, Mayor
City of Lodi



Toni Lundgren, City Manager
City of Manteca



Andy Su, Mayor
City of Mountain House



Wes Rhea, President & CEO
Visit Lodi



Bob Gutierrez, Interim President/CEO
San Joaquin Partnership



Bill Wells, Executive Director
California Delta Chambers & Visitors Bureau



JP Doucette, President & CEO
Lodi Chamber of Commerce



Christopher Dobson, General Manager
Sacramento Area Sewer District

/s/

John R. Beckman, CEO
BIA of the Greater Valley



Betty Wilson, Executive Director
Business Council of San Joaquin County
Association

/s/

Amy Blagg, Executive Director
Lodi District Grape Growers

/s/
Timm Quinn, CEO
Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce

/s/
Justin Hopkins, General Manager
Stockton East Water District


/s/
Shannon Hurles, CEO
Builders' Exchange of San Joaquin



Martha Guerro, Mayor
City of West Sacramento

/s/
Robyn Camino, Chief Executive
Visit Stockton

/s/
Tracie Graves, Founder/Administrator
SJ Delta Neighborhood Watch



Christina Fugazi, Mayor
City of Stockton