

July 26, 2006

Felicia Marcus and Tam M. Doduc, hearing officers
State Water Resources Control Board,
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

I am an investigative journalist who has published hundreds of articles about the Delta Tunnels in a wide array of publications. I have been covering fish, water, and environmental justice issues in California and the west for over 30 years.

In my reporting, I've covered many aspects of the controversial California Water Fix, formerly called the Bay Delta Conservation Plan.

- I've covered how the project won't create one drop of new water while spending up to \$67 billion of taxpayer and ratepayer's money.
- I've covered how the project's former point man Jerry Meral, in a moment of candor in 2013, claimed the Delta "cannot be saved," after years of promoting the peripheral canal and tunnels as the solution to the co-equal goals of water supply reliability.
- I've covered the reports of scientific panels ranging from the Delta Independence Science Board to federal EPA scientists that have given the alleged "science" of the tunnels project a failing grade.
- I've covered how the project won't help Californians during the drought, fund innovative water conservation, storm water capture, or water recycling projects that are desperately needed
- I've covered how the plan will push endangered fish species, such as Delta and longfin smelt, winter Chinook salmon, Central Valley steelhead and green sturgeon, over the abyss of extinction, while failing to address the state's long-term water supply needs.
- I've covered how the project will devastate not only San Francisco Bay and Delta fisheries, but recreational, commercial and subsistence fisheries up and down the West Coast. The salmon fishery alone is worth \$1.5 billion annually.
- I've covered how the tunnels will also imperil the salmon, steelhead and other fish populations on the Klamath and Trinity Rivers that are an integral part of the culture and livelihoods of the Yurok, Karuk and Hoopa Valley tribes.
- I've covered how the tunnels would devastate the Delta's \$5.2 billion agricultural economy and \$750 million recreation and tourism economy.
- I've covered how the Winnemem Wintu Tribe and other California Indian Tribes have been excluded or marginalized in the Delta Tunnels process.

- I've covered the lack of scoping meetings for the new plan, lack of details regarding financing, and addition of 8,000 new pages for public comment on top of the existing 40,000 pages that were added to the project last year.

- I've covered how documents for the tunnels projects, in an overt case of environmental injustice, have not been translated into Spanish and other languages, as required under an array of state and federal laws.

- I've covered how the current petition before the board and all of the previous plans, EIRs and documents of the BDCP have failed to address other alternatives, such as the Environmental Water Caucus' Sustainable Water Plan for California, for achieving the dual goals of ecosystem restoration and water supply.

But in the hundreds of hours I've spent covering the California WaterFix and its predecessors, there's one terminal flaw with the project that stands out among all others: the false assumption the project is based upon

The Water Fix is based on the absurd contention that taking up to 9,000 cfs of water from the Sacramento River at the new points of diversion, as requested in the petition by the Department of Water Resources and the Bureau of Reclamation, will somehow restore the Delta ecosystem.

I am not aware of a single project in US or world history where taking more water out of a river or estuary has resulted in the restoration of that river or estuary.

Based on this untenable premise and all of the flaws that thousands of Californians have pointed out about the project, I strongly urge you to reject the petition of DWR and the Bureau. The California WaterFix is a massive water grab for corporate agribusiness interests and Southern California water agencies, subsidized by the taxpayers, that must not be allowed to go forward.

Dan Bacher, Editor, Fish Sniffer Magazine