

Water Supply, Storage, and Conveyance
Quenching California's Thirst

BACKGROUND

California's water system is in great need of improvements. Our population is expected to grow by more than 600,000 people each year, mushrooming to as many as 48 million by 2020; Department of Water Resources projections show that this growth could increase annual water demands by 6 million acre feet by 2030; and recent studies predict that because of climate change 25% of the snowpack, which is our largest water storage system, will be lost by 2050.

To accommodate for growth as well as these anticipated hydrological changes, California must manage our water in a comprehensive, efficient manner. There are many impediments to doing so, including a tangible shortage of facilities, the lack of effective conveyance, and problems with the Delta. Twenty-five million Californians rely on the Delta for clean, safe water; and restoring the Delta is essential to irrigating hundreds of thousands of acres of Central Valley farmland.

Some of the state reservoirs are only filled to twenty-five percent of capacity resulting from several dry-years, and federal court decisions threaten to force significant long-term reductions from State Water Project pumps in the Delta. Several water districts have had to call for people to voluntarily cut their usage by ten percent and at least two districts have implemented mandatory rationing and a State of Emergency was declared in Kings County due to drought conditions.

In 2007, the Governor and Legislature convened a special session to attempt to deal with the water crisis but were unable to agree upon a bond package to present to voters. Although the two sides were extremely close to having a deal, certain environmental advocacy groups were unyielding when it came to the issue of off-stream storage and a compromise could not be reached.

Voters will now be faced with a situation where they may have to choose between two separate water bonds, which decreases the likelihood that anything at all will be passed.

The old California saying, "whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting," has never been more apt.

CBPA POSITION

The water shortfall in California is evident and the disaster is eminent unless we are able to act swiftly, decisively, and comprehensively to address issues related to levee safety, storage, conveyance, and supply.

CBPA supports legislation and other policy efforts to plan for and develop the infrastructure necessary to ensure a water supply adequate to meet the long-term needs of California's growing population.

CBPA supports increased storage capacity and advocates the need for more off-stream storage.

CBPA supports improved and increased conveyance capability.

CBPA supports water mitigation projects to enhance the environment as long as they are not in conflict with the ultimate goal of expanding water supply, increasing storage, or improving distribution.

CBPA supports the proposal to invest significant funding from Propositions 50, 84 and 1E to immediately relieve pressure on the Delta from environmental challenges and to respond to the recent federal court ruling that will reduce water deliveries.

CBPA supports significant funding toward restoration of the ailing Delta that would lead to the development of a new conveyance system.

CBPA supports legislation to spread the costs of new facility construction through the rate base, rather than shift the burden unfairly to new development through standby charges, wholesale connection fees, or other charges.

CBPA opposes legislation which would shift land use planning authority away from the counties to water or LAFCO agencies through mandatory findings or other requirements.

CBPA opposes efforts to use the Endangered Species Act and to limit water diversion from the Delta or inhibit construction of other water supply facilities.