

Policy Statement of the Regional Water Authority: Delta Vision and Related Actions

Adopted October 1, 2008

Background

The Regional Water Authority recognizes that the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and San Francisco Bay (Delta) represent important economic, environmental, historic, and cultural resources to California, providing for agricultural and recreational uses, irrigation and municipal water supply services for much of the state's population and agricultural land, fish and wildlife habitat, and pathways for transportation and other infrastructure.

Further, RWA recognizes the condition of the Delta is precarious. The fragile state of the Delta levee system, the decline of several native fish species, ongoing legal challenges, and changing hydrology and sea level rise caused by climate change threaten the ability of the Delta to provide for the full range of benefits identified above. State and federal agencies and an independent Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force are evaluating conditions in the Delta and evaluating a range of alternatives to address the issues facing the Delta.

This document is intended to identify the general principles that will guide RWA's participation and involvement in the development of solutions for the Delta. The following facts form the foundation for RWA's position.

1. The Regional Water Authority (RWA) represents 19 water purveyors and three affiliated members in Sacramento, Placer, El Dorado, and Yolo Counties.
2. The American and Sacramento Rivers provide for the municipal, agricultural, and environmental water needs of our region, the Delta, and much of the state.
3. Many RWA members negotiated the Water Forum Agreement, which provided a framework for meeting two co-equal objectives: 1) providing a reliable and safe water supply for the region's economic health and planned development to the year 2030, and 2) preserving the fishery, wildlife, recreational, and aesthetic values of the Lower American River.
4. Because of our location, some of the water used in our region returns to Delta tributaries and is available for environmental purposes or diversion by other water users.
5. RWA members are actively engaged in both individual and regional programs to use water more efficiently.
6. RWA members are actively engaged in development and implementation of integrated regional water management (IRWM) plans in both the American River Basin (ARB) and Cosumnes, American, Bear, and Yuba (CABY) regions to meet the water supply, water quality, and environmental needs of the region.

7. RWA members have developed and begun to implement a regional conjunctive use program to more effectively use the groundwater basin to improve local dry year water supply reliability.

8. The actions of RWA members have not been demonstrated to be responsible for the problems of the Delta.

RWA Policy

RWA adopts the following principles with respect to solutions for the problems of the Delta.

1. RWA will work collaboratively with state and federal agencies and other stakeholders to meet the environmental and water supply needs of our region, the Delta, and all of California.

2. RWA supports the concept of “beneficiary pays” and opposes any involuntary or uncompensated reallocation of water rights or entitlements, or redirection of environmental impacts, to meet the needs of Delta restoration.

3. RWA supports and will pursue improvements in water conservation that are consistent with the objectives of our region, but opposes any one-size-fits-all approach to water conservation that does not recognize the important differences between water uses that return water to the Delta or its tributaries and those that irretrievably convey water to other regions of the state.

4. RWA embraces the concept of regional self-sufficiency, and will continue to be one of the few self-reliant regions in the state. RWA supports proposals that encourage development and implementation of IRWM plans and increased implementation of groundwater storage and conjunctive use.

5. RWA supports transfers of water between willing buyers and sellers that do not redirect impacts to other water users or third parties.

6. RWA urges development of strategies for Delta restoration that are based on sound science.

7. RWA would support elements of a proposal for Delta improvements that improve the reliability and quality of water exports and restore natural hydrologic conditions within the Delta estuary, provided those improvements would not require the re-operation of the SWP and/or CVP in a manner that would have a negative impact on the supply reliability of our members.