



San Diego County
Water Authority

THE BAY-DELTA

A PLAN FOR CALIFORNIA'S PREMIER ESTUARY

FACT SHEET

The Water Authority is a public agency serving the San Diego region as a wholesale supplier of water. The Water Authority works through its 23 member agencies to provide a safe, reliable water supply to support the region's \$130 billion economy and the quality of life of 3 million residents.

A Crucial Water Resource

Because of its distinctive position within the state, the estuary formed where San Francisco Bay meets the delta of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers has far-reaching impacts on California.

More than 22 million Californians, including San Diego County residents, get at least a portion of their drinking water from the Bay-Delta. Businesses from Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area in the north, to San Diego and Los Angeles in the south, rely on Bay-Delta water.

Bay-Delta water irrigates 6 million acres and 200 types of crops in the Central Valley, producing almost half the nation's fruits and vegetables. The Bay-Delta is also the largest estuary on the West Coast of North America. It is home to more than 750 plant and animal species and is an essential rest stop for birds on the Pacific Flyway.

The Bay-Delta Needs Repair

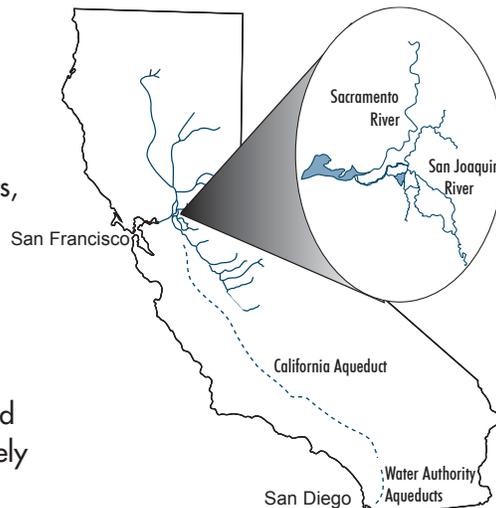
For 150 years, the Bay-Delta has suffered from the actions of agricultural, urban and rural interests that were often in competition for its water. The Bay-Delta estuary no longer functions adequately as either a water supply or a healthy habitat for fish and other wildlife.

The problems that affect the Bay-Delta are complex and difficult to solve.

- **Unreliable supplies of Bay-Delta water**
To protect listed fish species, pumping from the Bay-Delta must frequently be restricted. The reliability of supplies from the Bay-Delta is

also impaired by the limited capacity of water storage and the conveyance systems that deliver water to users.

- **Decline in water quality**
Industrial, agricultural and residential activities and seawater intrusion are degrading the Bay-Delta's water quality. Agencies using this water spend millions of dollars annually for treatment to ensure it is safe.
- **Ecosystem deterioration**
Urban, agricultural and rural runoff have degraded the Bay-Delta ecosystem to the point that several native species have been listed as threatened or endangered.



• Vulnerability of the levee system

An aging system of levees helps control flooding in the Bay-Delta. Levee failure due to an earthquake or other disaster could have a devastating impact on water quality and water supply deliveries.

The Bay-Delta provides between one-quarter and one-half of San Diego County's imported water, depending on supply conditions. Through its purchases of imported water, the Water Authority helps finance Bay-Delta improvements. As San Diego County's representative to the Bay-Delta program, the Water Authority is working to promote measures to improve the Bay-Delta that will benefit all of California, including San Diego County. The Water Authority also seeks a reliable, affordable supply of the Bay-Delta's relatively low-saline water.

Fixing the Bay-Delta

The Water Authority has been actively involved in efforts to fix the Bay-Delta for more than 15 years. In 1994, the Water Authority backed the formation of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, and now supports its successor, the California Bay-Delta Authority. Formed in 2002, this state agency is carrying out a comprehensive, long-term and balanced solution to the Bay-Delta's long-standing troubles.

The Bay-Delta Authority is unique for several reasons. It represents a partnership of the state and federal agencies responsible for various aspects of the Bay-Delta. It offers a participatory voice to water agencies and other stakeholders competing for Bay-Delta resources.



The environmentally sensitive Bay-Delta

The plan developed by the Bay-Delta Authority begins with the assumption that the estuary's problems are interrelated and must be addressed through a balanced approach.

The plan calls for improvements in the way water flows through the Delta to pumps and canals that convey water to cities and farms. It emphasizes making water use more efficient, increasing water storage capacity both north and south of the Bay-Delta, enhancing drinking water quality, and improving estuary management so fisheries and habitats are restored.

San Diego County and the Bay-Delta

The Water Authority provides a voice for San Diego County in the California Bay-Delta Authority process.

As a significant source of funding to the Bay-Delta Authority, the Water Authority advocates funding for Bay-Delta improvements that will benefit San Diego County. This

includes measures to reduce demand for water from the Bay-Delta such as:

- Funding for seawater desalination projects in the county
- Support for local conservation and water recycling programs
- A fair share of funds for the San Diego region from Proposition 50, the \$3.4 billion water bond approved by voters in 2002 for fresh water and coastal resource projects

Like other urban water agencies, the Water Authority seeks improvements in the quality and reliability of Bay-Delta water. However, such improvements must be cost-effective when compared to other available water supply options.

Financing Bay-Delta Solutions

The Water Authority has joined efforts to secure adequate, stable funding from the federal government for the Bay-Delta Authority.

Program planners assumed equal amounts of funding would come from the state, the federal government and local water interests. However, since the program's federal funding authorization expired in 1999, the federal government has provided only 7 percent of the more than \$2 billion invested in program activities. The Water Authority supports legislation introduced in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to restore the funding authorization and provide the federal government's share of Bay-Delta Authority funding through 2008.

Additional information about the Bay-Delta estuary is available at the California Bay-Delta Authority Web site, www.calwater.ca.gov.



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