



**Delta
Stewardship
Council**

A CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCY

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COUNCIL SHARES PROGRESS ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

Efforts described as a model for how government agencies should conduct environmental justice work

STOCKTON – At the August 25, 2022, Delta Stewardship Council meeting, staff presented results from recent interviews with environmental justice organizations and advocates. These interviews were conducted to inform the development of a paper on EJ issues in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, which was initiated in response to a recommendation from the 2019 Delta Plan Five-Year Review. Through this paper, the Council aims to build a network of community leaders and organizations to inform and support the Council's EJ work; identify the associated issues impacting communities in and around the Delta; and chart options to address those issues.

"Delta issues are California issues," said Chair Virginia Madueño. "This work is about human dignity. As EJ issues continue to become a greater priority, we have a responsibility as Delta stewards to set the tone and example for how EJ work is conducted."

Leading up to the interviews, Council staff researched the background of potential issues, gathered and analyzed public comments, hosted a webinar series, and formed an expert group, consisting of representatives from EJ organizations.

"EJ is essential work and we think your agency is a model for other State, federal, and local government entities in how this work should be done," said Restore the Delta Executive Director Barbara Barrigan-Parilla. "We feel our 10 years of public comments were heard."

Council staff identified eight topical issue areas that emerged as key concerns from the interviews: (1) climate change, (2) flood risk, (3) water, (4) pollution and public

health, (5) housing and unhoused communities, (6) food security and access, (7) tribal and indigenous justice, and (8) recreational access. Council staff explained that these issues are highly interconnected. “When you change one thing, it will change another,” read California Sea Grant Social Science Extension Specialist Dr. Jessica Rudnick from an interview record. “We must use that intersection to build [broader] community with groups that are not explicitly focused on the issue at hand.”

From here, Council staff will prepare to host public workshops, form draft recommendations, and develop a draft report, which is expected for public review in 2023. They will document their process to share with government agencies and non-government organizations that aim to strengthen their understanding of and approach to regional EJ issues.

A [recording of the panel discussion](https://cal-span.org/meeting/dsc_20220825) (cal-span.org/meeting/dsc_20220825), which begins at 2:22, and staff’s presentation, report, and summary of interviews are available in the latest news section of the Council’s [environmental justice web page](https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/environmental-justice) (deltacouncil.ca.gov/environmental-justice).

For more information, email media@deltacouncil.ca.gov.

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About the Council

The Delta Stewardship Council was created by the California Legislature in 2009 to advance California’s water supply reliability and the Delta’s ecosystem resiliency in a manner that protects and enhances the region’s unique characteristics. It is composed of seven members, advised by an independent 10-member science board, and supported by a dedicated staff. For more information visit the [Council’s website](https://deltacouncil.ca.gov) (deltacouncil.ca.gov).