
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE DELTA PLAN

The Delta Stewardship Council, an independent state agency, is issuing this notice to advise the public that a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR) for the Delta Plan has been prepared and is now available for public review and comment for 60 days, from November 4, 2011 through (and including) January 3, 2012. This notice is provided pursuant to noticing requirements found in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Sec. 21092), and the State CEQA Guidelines (Guidelines Sec. 15087).

SUMMARY

In November 2009, the California Legislature enacted SBX7 1. It requires the Delta Stewardship Council to develop, adopt, and implement by January 1, 2012 the Delta Plan, a legally enforceable, comprehensive, long-term management plan for the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta and the Suisun Marsh (Delta) that achieves the coequal goals (Water Code section 85300(a)). “Coequal goals means the two goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place” (Water Code section 85054). Achieving the coequal goals is a primary and fundamental purpose of the Delta Plan. **A draft Delta Plan to meet the requirements of SBX7 1 has been prepared and is the proposed project being evaluated in the DPEIR.**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND PROJECT AREA

The draft Delta Plan generally covers five topic areas and goals: increased water supply reliability, restoration of the Delta ecosystem, improved water quality, reduced risks of flooding in the Delta, and protection and enhancement of the Delta as an evolving place. Through the Delta Plan, however, the Council does not propose or contemplate constructing, owning, or operating any facilities related to these five topic areas. Rather, the Delta Plan sets forth regulatory policies, and recommendations, that seek to influence the actions, activities and projects of cities, counties, and State, federal, regional and local agencies toward meeting the goals in the five topic areas. Examples of the types of actions/activities the Delta Plan seeks to influence include, but are not limited to: new or expanded water storage reservoirs; wetlands and riparian restoration; invasive species management; water flow patterns in the Delta; water, wastewater, stormwater and agricultural runoff water treatment; levee modification and construction; floodplain expansion; new/improved active and passive recreation opportunities in the Delta.

The focus of the Delta Plan is on the Delta and Suisun Marsh, although the Delta Plan could have influence beyond the Delta. The Delta area is generally located west of Sacramento and east of the San Francisco Bay area within the network of waterways formed primarily by the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. Activities the Delta Plan could influence in the Delta and Suisun Marsh could include, for example, levee improvements, wetlands restoration and recreation projects, among others. Accomplishing the coequal goals across the five topic areas the Delta Plan covers, however, could involve physical actions (should other agencies undertake them) in areas outside the Delta, including the Delta Watershed to the north of the Delta and other areas that currently rely on water exported from the Delta. These areas include, for example, portions of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys and southern California. Activities the Delta Plan could influence in those areas could include, for example, groundwater storage enhancements, new/expanded reservoirs and treatment plants, among others. See attached map.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

Copies of the Draft Delta Plan Program EIR are available online at the Delta Stewardship Council’s Web site: <http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov>. You can obtain a CD-ROM copy of the DPEIR by sending an e-mail with the subject line “Request for CD-ROM Copy of DPEIR” to eircomments@deltacouncil.ca.gov, or by calling 916-445-0144. A copy of the DPEIR and any documents incorporated by reference are also available for viewing at the Delta Stewardship Council offices located at 980 9th Street, Suite 1500, Sacramento, CA 95814. Lastly, a copy of the DPEIR is available in the main branch of each County library in counties that possibly could be affected by the Delta Plan; addresses for these libraries can be found at <http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov>.

PROVIDING COMMENTS ON THE DPEIR; PUBLIC MEETINGS

Written comments on the Draft Delta Plan Program EIR should be provided to the Delta Stewardship Council on or before January 3, 2012. Written comments on the Draft Delta Plan Program EIR should be sent to: "EIR Comments", Delta Stewardship Council, 980 Ninth Street, Suite 1500, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Comments on the DPEIR may also be submitted electronically through the Delta Stewardship Council’s web site at <http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov>, or via e-mail with the subject line “Draft EIR” to eircomments@deltacouncil.ca.gov. Comments may also be provided orally or in writing at public Council meetings on the following dates:

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- Thursday, November 17, 2011
1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Council will take oral public comment)
Sheraton Grand Hotel, 1230 J Street, Sacramento, CA
 - Thursday, December 15, 2011
1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Council will take oral public comment)
California State Capitol, Room 447, Sacramento, CA

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Terry Macaulay, Interim Chief Deputy Executive Officer, Delta Stewardship Council, 980 9th Street, Suite 1500 , Sacramento, CA 95814 (telephone: 916-445-0144 or 916-445-5511).

ANTICIPATED SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT: Through the Delta Plan, the Council does not propose construction, operation or maintenance of any facilities. Rather, the Council seeks to influence other agencies to take certain actions. The degree to which that influence results in physical changes to the environment is uncertain, and depends upon what specific actions those other agencies propose. The DPEIR takes a conservative approach, however, in concluding that activities/projects other agencies could implement that the Delta Plan could influence may have significant environmental impacts to resources in the following areas: water resources, biological resources, flood management, land use and planning, agriculture and forestry resources, visual resources, air quality, cultural resources, geology and soils, paleontological resources, mineral resources, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, recreation, transportation, utilities, climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.



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