



DRAFT

SUMMARY NOVEMBER 20, 2025

DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEETING

For review and adoption by the Council at the December 18, 2025, meeting.

All meeting materials, presentations, and comment letters are available at
<https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/council-meetings>

MEETING SUMMARY

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Lee called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM on November 20, 2025, at the California Natural Resources Agency at 715 P Street, Room 2-221, Sacramento, California 95814.

2. ROLL CALL – ESTABLISH A QUORUM (WATER CODE §85210.5)

Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established. The following Councilmembers were present: Burgis, Hueso, Miller, Patterson, Zingale, and Lee. (Government Code § 11123)

Councilmember Mehranian joined the meeting during agenda item 4.

Chair Lee adjourned the meeting for closed session.

3. CLOSED SESSION

Chair Lee reconvened the meeting at 9:37 a.m. and noted there was nothing to report out from Closed Session.

Jorge Aguilar reported on the cases discussed in closed session: 1) *County of Sacramento, et al v. Delta Stewardship Council* (Sacramento Superior Court No. 25

WM000030); and 2) *Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District, et al. v. California Department of Water Resources* (Court of Appeal of the State of California, Third Appellate District, Case No. C101878).

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

Emma Askea, Clerk of the Board, noted that public comments had been received via email since the last meeting and were available in the room and online.

There was no public comment in Sacramento, Eureka, or Phoenix.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/4oJkHOX>, minute 00:01:18.

Councilmember Mehranian joined the meeting during this agenda item.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR (ACTION ITEM)

4a. Adoption of October 23, Meeting Summary

Chair Lee presented the agenda item for adopting the consent calendar.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento, Eureka, or Phoenix.

Motion (approve the consent calendar): offered by Councilmember Mehranian, seconded by Councilmember Burgis.

Vote: 7/0 - The motion was adopted (Burgis: Aye, Hueso: Aye, Lee: Aye, Mehranian: Aye, Miller: Aye, Patterson: Aye, Zingale: Aye)

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/4oJkHOX>, minute 00:01:55.

6. CHAIR'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Chair Lee provided reflections from the State of the Estuary conference including the conference's focus on community engagement, the integration of art in the event, and the main takeaways.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento, Eureka, or Phoenix.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/4oJkHOX>, minute 00:02:46.

7. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Executive Officer Jessica Pearson began her report by announcing that a new episode of the Delta Dispatch podcast had been released. Pearson reported there have been no new certifications of consistency filed since the last Council meeting. Pearson highlighted the receipt of 10 appeals filed for the Department of Water Resources Delta Conveyance Project Certification of Consistency. Pearson highlighted that the Council will issue a notice of hearing for the appeals providing the details, including time and place.

a. Legal Update

Jorge Aguilar, chief counsel, announced that due to the receipt of appeals of the certification of consistency for the Delta Conveyance Project, the Council is now under ex parte communications and explained the parameters of those restrictions.

b. Legislative Update

Audrey Cho, legislative and policy advisor, provided an update on Senate leadership, and reviewed vetoed bills of note to the Council. Cho reported on Executive Officer Pearson's presentation at the Water Policy Academy, provided updates on new funds for abandoned vessel cleanup, and reported on the changes to the Delta Districts due to the passage of Proposition 50. Cho closed with a review of the re-

opening of the Federal government, future funding bills, and staff reductions at key agencies that support the Delta.

Pearson closed highlighting the Outreach Highlights Report and the Active Projects List.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento, Eureka, or Phoenix.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/4oJkHOX>, minute 00:24:35.

8. LEAD SCIENTIST REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Delta Lead Scientist Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers provided an update on an article of interest, "The Effect of Tidal Marsh Restoration on Food Webs," which detailed changes in food webs in the Delta from the 1800s to the early 2000s. The key takeaways for restoring food webs in the Delta were the vegetation strategy (channel development), long-term monitoring, and more targeted research.

Dr. Windham-Myers covered Delta Science Program activities, including the Adaptive Management Forum, the State of the Estuary Conference, and the North American Invasive Species Management Association Annual Conference. She also highlighted the December 4 Delta Invasive Species Symposium before closing with the "By the Numbers" document and a presentation on Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs).

The HABs presentation covered where HABs were reported from 2021 to 2025, and when and how intense HABs were in the Delta in 2025.

Councilmember Burgis and Dr. Windham-Myers discussed zooplankton and how they are monitored and considered in restoration efforts, especially given concerns about sea-level rise vulnerability.

Chair Lee, Councilmember Mehranian, Councilmember Burgis, Dr. Windham-Myers, and Chief Executive Officer Pearson discussed the reasons for the changes in the

Delta and how we (as a people) decided to turn the wetlands into farmland because of their rich soil (Swamp Act).

Councilmember Patterson, Councilmember Burgis, Dr. Windham-Myers, and Environmental Scientist Nick Rowland discussed technological options to improve monitoring data quality, given perceived inconsistencies in the data (satellite concerns). Dr. Windham-Myers explained the maintenance issues and the lack of a single agency responsible for monitoring toxicity. Councilmember Burgis inquired about satellite funding and its security, noting that HABs affect local food sustainability, recreation, pet poisonings, public health (aerosolization), and HAB reporting.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento, Eureka, or Phoenix.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda <https://bit.ly/4ojkHOX>, minute 00:19:00.

9. SOCIAL SCIENCE INTEGRATION: UPDATE ON RECENT EFFORTS AND INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW SOCIAL SCIENCE EXTENSION SPECIALIST (INFORMATION ITEM)

Dr. Windham-Myers introduced the agenda item and handed it off to Environmental Program Manager Morgan Chow, Environmental Scientist Dr. Hollis Jones, and Social Science Extension Specialist Dr. Tara Pozzi (California Sea Grant) provided an overview of the history of social science integration in the Council's work.

The presentation covered what social science is, why it's necessary, its importance in the Delta, an overview of the Social Science Task Force 2020 Report, and progress highlights from the past five years.

Following the team presentation, Dr. Pozzi presented to the Council. She described her role as a Social Science Extension Specialist, the research and extension program (program goals: adaptation governance and strategies, social well-being and resilience, and social science capacity), and the program's priorities, including adaptation governance and strategy, social well-being, and social science capacity.

Chair Lee, Councilmember Mehranian, Councilmember Zingale, Councilmember Burgis, and Dr. Pozzi discussed social science capacity—its relation to social well-being and resilience, vulnerability surveys, measuring the impacts of social science (how it affects people's lives), and how social science is becoming part of Delta discussions.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento, Eureka, or Phoenix.

Chair Lee announced that Vice Chair Miller had left the meeting.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda <https://bit.ly/4ojkHOX>, minute 00:57:52.

10. RESEARCH IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF DELTA SCIENCE PROGRAM FUNDED RESEARCH (INFORMATION ITEM)

Chair Lee introduced Senior Environmental Scientist Dr. Ash Zemenick, and Environmental Program Manager Dr. Rachael Klopfenstein, who presented the findings from the Research Impact Assessment, which aims to track the scientific and management impacts of Council-funded projects.

The presentation covered the Council's Delta Science Program (DSP), including why they are evaluating the impact of DSP-funded research, how they measure research impact, the impact model they developed, the pilot effort to assess DSP research impact, the data collected, preliminary results, and key insights from the project.

Councilmember Zingale, Councilmember Patterson, Councilmember Mehranian, Dr. Zemenick, and Dr. Klopfenstein discussed whether community co-design ever altered or improved research, the potential of using the process to inform future solicitations, expanding into a broader evaluation of impact, and methodology/measurements for establishing criteria.

Councilmember Burgis emphasized the importance of trust in government and noted that this impact assessment demonstrates that trust for everyone involved.

Councilmember Burgis and Pearson discussed how this type of research can help support the development of future concerns that are not yet known.

Chair Lee, Councilmember Burgis, Dr. Klopfenstein, and Dr. Zemenick discussed how often updates should be made, reporting methods, upcoming technologies, and other strategies to manage the 9-year lifecycle, address financial limitations, and leverage AI as a tool.

Chair Lee, Councilmember Patterson, Pearson, Dr. Klopfenstein, and Dr. Zemenick discussed science expenditures for 2022-23, funding sources (Department of Water Resources and Bureau of Reclamation as the main funders), and how we can leverage social science to benefit the community and policymakers.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento, Eureka, or Phoenix.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda <https://bit.ly/4ojkHOX>, minute 01:24:44.

11. PREPARATION FOR NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

The next Council meeting will take place on December 18, 2025. Please refer to the posted meeting notice 10 days before the meeting for further information or updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

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