

DRAFT

SUMMARY DECEMBER 18, 2025

DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEETING

For review and adoption by the Council at the January 22, 2026, 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 December 18, 2025, at the California Natural Resources Agency at 715 P Street, Room 2-302, 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, Mehranian, Miller, Patterson, Zingale, and Lee. (Government Code § 11123)

Councilmember Hueso joined the meeting during agenda item 4.

Chair Lee adjourned the meeting for closed session.

3. CLOSED SESSION

Chair Lee reconvened open session at 9:37 a.m. and noted the Council took no action during closed session and met with legal council to discuss *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.

There was no public comment in Sacramento or Eureka.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at rebrand.ly/qxlbmtb, minute 00:01:18.

Councilmember Hueso joined the meeting during this agenda item.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR (ACTION ITEM)

4a. Adoption of November 20, 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 or Eureka.

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

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 rebrand.ly/qxlbmtb, minute 00:01:53.

6. CHAIR'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Chair Lee provided reflections from her first full year as the Chair of the Council, and the accomplishments of the Council this year, including regulations, Delta Adapts, the Tribal and Environmental Justice Issue paper, and SB 650. Chair Lee highlighted her attendance at the Delta Independent Science Board meeting earlier this month,

including a presentation on Social Science at the Council and mentioned a recent blog post about the subject.

Councilmember Zingale thanked Chair Lee for her leadership and for highlighting the Tribal and Environmental Justice Issue paper.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento or Eureka.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at rebrand.ly/qxlbtmb, minute 00:03:38.

7. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Executive Officer Jessica Pearson began her report by providing an update on the Delta Smelt and Native Species Preservation Project from Metropolitan Water District. On December 9th, 3,000 juvenile Delta Smelt were transported from the UC Davis Fish Conservation and Culture Laboratory to an impoundment pond on Bouldin Island in the southern Delta. The results from this study will be used to modify, refine, and advance alternative aquaculture of Delta Smelt to potentially improve the Central Valley and State Water Projects' ability to meet their permit requirements to produce 500,000 Delta Smelt by 2030. The experiment will conclude in February 2026. Pearson next shared that the State Water Resources Control Board released an amended version of the proposed Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan update, along with a new chapter to its 2023 draft staff report that provides additional environmental and economic analysis and an updated project description. The Board is accepting public comments on the amendments and new chapter draft through February 2, 2026, and will hold a public hearing on January 28-30 in Sacramento, with an option for remote participation.

Pearson reported that she attended the Central Valley Flood Control Association Board's December 16 Annual Flood Forum. Pearson shared there have been no new certifications of consistency filed since our last Council meeting and provided an update on the Department of Water Resources' Delta Conveyance Project certification of consistency with the Delta Plan, which received ten appeals. The hearing for these appeals has been set and will be held on February 25th and 26th at the California Natural Resources Headquarters Building, 715 P St, in room 221. Pearson summarized a comment letter sent by Council staff to Suisun City regarding the Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the

Suisun Expansion Project, a land use application submitted to the City by real estate development company California Forever.

Pearson welcomed Amanda Grant as the new business services and acquisitions manager.

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

a. Legal Update

There was no legal update.

b. Legislative Update

Audrey Cho, legislative and policy advisor, provided an update on Federal bills of interest to the Council, and a Federal water policy update.

Councilmember Zingale, Pearson, and Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers discussed survival rate on the Delta Smelt research project. Councilmember Mehranian and Pearson discussed previous Delta smelt experiments.

c. Annual Report

Brittany Young, information officer II, and Carlie Guadagnolo, information officer I presented on the 2025 Annual Report. Young and Guadagnolo provided an overview of the purpose and a summary of the contents of the Annual Report. Young closed highlighting the distribution and outreach plan for the report.

Councilmember Burgis, Chair Lee, and Pearson commended the work of the team, and the benefit of the report. Young, Councilmember Burgis, and Councilmember Mehranian discussed analytics and accessibility of the Annual Report.

Councilmember Zingale and Young discussed future opportunities to include comments from community members in future Annual Reports.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento or Eureka.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at rebrand.ly/qxlbtmb, minute 00:07:07.

8. LEAD SCIENTIST REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Delta Lead Scientist Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers presented on California's growing international partnerships, including a partnership with Australia (CSIRO, Australia's National Science Agency) on Aquawatch and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines five years of cooperation between California and Australia on clean energy, clean transportation, clean technologies, nature-based solutions, climate adaptation, green finance and investment, and the circular economy.

Delta Lead Scientist Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers also presented on an article of interest, "An Integrated Sensor Network and Data Driven Approach to Satellite Remote Sensing of Dissolved Organic Matter," which detailed the utility of an integrated sensor network that builds effective models for dissolved organic matter retrieval using coupled, extensive in situ data sets and satellite data in the Sacramento—San Joaquin River Delta, an extensive inland river delta and estuary system in California.

Dr. Windham-Myers covered Delta Science Program activities, including peer review updates on the water year 2024 and 2025 winter-run Chinook salmon annual loss, spring-run juvenile production estimate, and Stanislaus River Steelhead juvenile production estimate. She highlighted the March 5, 2026, Bay-Delta blue carbon symposium at UC Davis and closed with an overview of the "by the numbers" report.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento or Eureka.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda rebrand.ly/qxlbtmb, minute 00:34:47.

9. METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION/ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS' PLAN BAY AREA 2050+ (ACTION ITEM)

Deputy Executive Officer for Planning and Performance, Jeff Henderson, provided an overview of the agenda item and then passed it to the Resilience Planner at the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Michael Germeraad, for a presentation.

Germeraad presented on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Association of Bay Area Governments Draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, known as the Plan Bay Area 2050+, and its relationship to the Delta Plan.

The presentation covered the MTC, the Council's Regional Planning Authority, and why it matters—specifically, the covered actions exemption in the secondary zone, transportation and land-use authority, and coordination and data sharing with MTC and the Council. It also addressed the draft Plan Bay Area 2050+—its background, schedule, long-range planning with federal and State requirements, and the transition from plans to implementation.

The presentation further discussed the plan's vision, elements, themes, key focus areas, growth geographies, and strategic strategies. It highlighted transportation and resilience projects, performance and equity outcomes by the year 2050, draft implementation plan: environment highlights, next steps, and a staff recommendation for the Council to find that the Plan Bay Area 2050+ is not inconsistent with the Delta Plan, and to approve a resolution to submit the plan and draft environmental impact report comment letter.

Chair Lee and Germeraad discussed coordination with BCDC and the MTC regarding sea-level rise.

Councilmember Zingale supported staff recommendations and discussed avenues for the Council to endorse the letter with Chair Lee, Chief Counsel Aguilar, and Henderson.

Councilmember Burgis expressed concern that job creation and quality of life from a need to commute (residence not in proximity to occupation) were not being emphasized enough in the plan.

Councilmember Mehranian and Germeraad discussed distances and the spatial relationships between jobs and residences, the outcomes portion of the presentation, current and future sea-level rise assumptions, and socioeconomic trends in transportation use.

Councilmember Burgis offered a statement on the lack of transportation infrastructure and reiterated the importance of jobs being located near residences. She also proposed adding language to the letter to address her concerns.

Aguilar, Henderson, Councilmember Patterson, Councilmember Hueso, Vice Chair Miller, and Councilmember Burgis discussed the Council's purview, regulatory/recommendation process, and how modifications to the resolution could be added to address "Delta as a Place."

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento or Eureka.

Motion (adopt Resolution 2025-10): offered by Councilmember Zingale (with an addition to paragraph two of the resolution regarding "Delta as a place"), seconded by Councilmember Mehranian.

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

The item is viewable on the linked agenda rebrand.ly/gxlbmtb, minute 00:52:54.

10. UPDATE ON OPERATION BASELINE (INFORMATION ITEM)

The Council's Executive Officer, Jessica Pearson, provided an overview of the agenda item, then passed it to Program Manager for the Council, Dylan Stern, and to Dr. Tamara Kraus of the United States Geological Survey, for their presentation.

Dr. Kraus and Stern discussed Operation Baseline, a multi-year research initiative to modernize water-quality monitoring in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The presentation explored the role of nutrients as a potential key factor in the decline of pelagic organisms, both native and non-native, emphasizing the importance of nutrient types and phytoplankton levels. They outlined how Operation Baseline fits into this scenario by advancing monitoring techniques and modernizing data collection across space and time.

Dr. Kraus and Stern highlighted how the project improved water-quality monitoring by introducing new instrumentation that measures phytoplankton abundance and species. High-resolution mapping surveys captured spatial information that fixed stations often missed, and the initiative expanded monitoring of harmful algal blooms (HABs), cyanotoxins, and sediment nutrients. Operation Baseline generated data for model development and ground-truthing, supporting the creation of integrated, near-real-time monitoring systems for system-wide insights. The presentation concluded with a look toward future efforts, considering shifting baselines in water quality management.

Pearson Stern, and Dr. Kraus discussed lessons learned (Delta Smelt population, beneficial vs. harmful nutrients, no measurable change in the growth of beneficial phytoplankton, reduction in nutrient input, and the heterogeneity of the Delta).

Chair Lee, Councilmember Burgis, and Stern discussed changes in ownership of water quality monitoring stations and how consistency will be maintained (funding/contracts), the US Bureau of Reclamation's role in addressing that question, alternative monitoring solutions when central monitoring is down or not functioning, and the struggle to capture all monitoring data.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

Public Comment

Senior Scientist, Sacramento Area Sewer District, Tim Mussen, provided a public comment on their appreciation to the Delta Science Program and the Delta Stewardship Council for taking on the question of environmental impacts of reducing nutrients in the waste reduction plant, combat science versus

collaboration, scientific techniques/processes gained from the scientific cooperation, more information from the data to be used for different questions, need for wholistic scientific experiments are critical, shared understanding is where we will find effective regulations, and continued partnership.

There was no public comment in Eureka.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda rebrand.ly/qxlbmtb, minute 01:38:49.

11. PREPARATION FOR NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

The next Council meeting will take place on January 22, 2026. Please refer to the posted meeting notice 10 days before the meeting for further information or updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

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