



# Delta Stewardship Council

A CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCY

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September 28, 2022

Dr. Lisa Wainger, Chair  
Delta Independent Science Board  
715 P Street, 15-300 Sacramento, CA 95814

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## **RE: The Delta Independent Science Board's Review of Water Supply Reliability Estimation Related to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta**

Dear Chair Wainger and Past Chair Brandt:

The Delta Stewardship Council (Council) thanks the Delta Independent Science Board (ISB) for its *Review of Water Supply Reliability Estimation Related to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta*, and for Dr. Jay Lund and Dr. Thomas Holzer's thorough and captivating presentation to the Council at its June 23, 2022 meeting.

The Delta ISB plays an important and critical role in providing scientific expertise and reviews of science, such as this one, to ensure the provision of best available science to support water and environmental decision-making in the Delta. In a complex and ever-evolving Delta, reviews by the Delta ISB help to elevate constant and emerging issues across a variety of topics to inform and advance policy and management.

The Delta ISB's review of water supply reliability estimation spotlights key progress and outstanding needs related to fulfilling one of the fundamental coequal goals

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for the Delta: providing a more reliable water supply for California. Given California's dynamic hydrology, its complex water systems, and the importance of the Delta as a hub for water systems that supply water to approximately 27 million people, estimating water supply reliability is a critical tool for sustaining the variety of human and environmental uses of water.

We look forward to working with the Delta ISB to facilitate discussions with representatives of key agencies, including members of the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee, in order to promote this review. With this letter, the Council seeks to communicate a number of ongoing and future efforts that align closely with and will implement the findings and recommendations of the Delta ISB's recent review. They include:

- **Reduced Reliance Reporting:** Council staff worked with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to develop an example reporting approach that water suppliers can use to consistently quantify reduced reliance on Delta water sources as part of their 2020 Urban Water Management Plans (UWMPs). DWR is now compiling results from water suppliers' UWMPs to prepare a reduced reliance assessment that Council staff will use to update data tracked through Delta Plan Performance Measures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.4. This most closely aligns with the review's **Practice Recommendation #1**, which recommends portfolio-based water management to improve cost-effectiveness and equity. This work implements Delta Plan Recommendations **WR R4 Expanded Water Supply Reliability Element**, and **WR R5 Develop Water Supply Reliability Element Guidelines**. The Council is featuring a panel at our October 27 meeting on reduced reliance and increased regional self-reliance to learn about current statewide investments in local supplies.
- **Tracking Water Supply Reliability Benefits:** As noted above, several Delta Plan Performance Measures are designed to track improvements in water supply reliability, but there are no measures that track the benefits of that improved reliability. As part of a future work plan, the Council's Planning Division and Social Science Integration Team will consider developing additional performance metrics that support public health, economic, and social benefits that could be realized by more reliable water supplies. This most closely aligns with the review's **Practice Recommendation #2**, which recommends that performance assessments should be broadened beyond

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technical reliability to include multiple benefits that support public health, economic, ecological, and social objectives.

- **Implementation of the 2022-2026 Science Action Agenda (SAA):** The recently completed SAA includes a number of science actions on and related to water supply, thanks in part to the Delta ISB's input. The SAA is most closely aligned with the review's **Research Recommendation #8** which calls for additional investment in research and education to improve water supply reliability estimation science and practice. The Council will seek to leverage the findings and recommendations of the Delta ISB's review in implementing and funding the SAA.
- **The Salinity Management Workshop Series:** This initiative, led by Delta Lead Scientist Dr. Laurel Larsen and the Council's Adaptive Management Unit, seeks to provide scenario-based analyses for assessing tradeoffs associated with salinity managed in the face of climate change. This workshop series will help to advance the review's **Research Recommendation #7**, which recommends that estimation methods be updated to reflect climate change and take advantage of scenario-based and probabilistic analyses to quantify uncertainties in order to identify management options.
- **A Modeling Collaboratory:** Plans are underway to launch a modeling collaboratory (i.e., a virtual and or physical center for Delta modelers and managers to convene and share resources, tools and knowledge) following a Delta Science Program-led series of workshops. Integral to the plans for the collaboratory are principles espoused by the review's **Research Recommendation #3** related to enhancing data and model sharing in order to improve decision-making and policy. The collaboratory will also advance a common set of model boundary conditions and inputs (e.g., Delta reservoir inflows under projected future climate, projected sea-level rise).

These are some, but not all, of the ways in which the Council plans to leverage the Delta ISB's review's findings going forward, and we welcome additional opportunities to discuss approaches and opportunities to advance implementation of the report's recommendations.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to congratulate the Delta ISB's achievement in producing this landmark review and thank you for the critical contribution it provides to our state of knowledge and ability to manage Delta resources to further advance the state's coequal goals.

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With Warm Regards,

*Virginia Madueño*  
Virginia Madueño,

Chair, Delta Stewardship Council

Cc:

Dr. Virginia Dale, Member, Delta Independent Science Board  
Dr. Harindra Fernando, Member, Delta Independent Science Board  
Dr. Tanya Heikkila, Member, Delta Independent Science Board  
Dr. Thomas Holzer, Member, Delta Independent Science Board  
Dr. Jay Lund, Member, Delta Independent Science Board  
Dr. Diane McKnight, Member, Delta Independent Science Board  
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