



May 31, 2022

Via email

Virginia Madueno, Vice Chair, and members
Delta Stewardship Council
715 P Street, 15-300
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Please provide full support for the Delta Independent Science Board in this year's budget negotiations

Dear Vice Chair and Council members,

We wanted to express our appreciation of the Vice Chair's leading the Council during this time of transition. We wanted to call the Council's attention to an important legislative proposal.

The California Senate has proposed a \$2 Billion expenditure to rebalance water supply and water rights¹. It includes the following:

\$100 million for the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, including: Funding for voluntary projects that create wetland habitat and improve flood protection. This program shall be designed to provide multiple benefits for ecosystem restoration, including refuge water supplies and flow enhancement actions beyond those included in Phase 1 of the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan Update. The program will use the Delta Independent Science Board to provide monitoring and oversight.

\$100 million to improve water management science and agency coordination, including:

- Funding to improve scientific evaluation and information sharing between SWRCB, DFW, the California Water Commission, the Delta Independent Science Board, and the Department of Water Resources (DWR).
- Funding to SWRCB, DFW, and WCB for program implementation, and to establish a statewide environmental water master program.

Independent scientific oversight and peer review of the Delta Science enterprise's drought and climate adaptation efforts is essential for those efforts to be successful. The Senate's visionary and innovate proposal could fund such oversight by the Delta ISB.

¹ For more background, see our May 30, 2022 blog post on the proposal: [Senate Climate Budget Plan proposals on water management science.](#)

We are concerned that there was no legislative briefing of the Delta Stewardship Council at the May 26, 2022, meeting, nor was there been any legislative briefing of the Delta ISB at their May meeting, and the Delta Stewardship Council Executive Director has indicated that engaging with the legislature on the Senate proposal for the Delta ISB is not a priority, explaining:

As you know each year there are several different Delta related proposals, like what the Senate rolled out on May 10, and most die or morph quite a bit from their initial content and topic, and so we have to be judicious in how we spend our time on high level initial proposals that are quite likely to change or not move forward altogether.

We contrast this with the Delta Stewardship Council staff's statement during the negotiations for the FY 2021-22 budget and SB 821 that "everything possible" that could be done to support the Delta ISB was being done. We ask that the Council staff be directed to similarly "do everything possible" to support the Delta ISB in this year's budget negotiations.

As a reminder to new Council members, in February 2019, the Delta ISB sent a letter to the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee proposing a Science Needs Assessment for rapid climate change. The letter stated in part:

The major state, federal, and local agencies and users involved in science for the Delta, along with major non-agency Delta and estuary specialists, should develop a comprehensive scientific needs assessment based on fundamental system-wide scientific and management challenges facing the Delta. This could be accomplished with the commission of a task force of leading scientists from inside and outside the Delta system to identify 1) future Delta conditions and fundamental driving forces, and 2) science needs to forecast/predict how the Delta might change under these conditions. Stakeholder engagement also must be an important component of this effort. The Delta Independent Science Board can help to organize and implement the framework for the scientific needs assessment.

Given the accelerating impacts of climate change, the Science Needs Assessment is one of the most important initiatives of the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee. Unfortunately, the Delta ISB essentially lost all funding in FY 2020-21 to help organize or implement the framework for the Science Needs Assessment and is just getting up to speed under the able direction of the Delta ISB Chair, Steve Brandt, and the Chair Elect, Lisa Wainger. The funding proposed by the Senate could greatly increase the capacity of the Delta ISB.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.



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cc:

Delta Independent Science Board members

The Honorable Wade Crowfoot, Secretary of Natural Resources

Delta Lead Scientist Laurel Larsen

Delta Stewardship Council Executive Officer Jessica Pearson

Delta Stewardship Council Chief Deputy Executive Officer Ryan Stanbra

Delta Stewardship Council Executive Officer for Science Louise Conrad

Anita Lee, Consultant, Senate Budget Subcommittee #2 on Resources, Environmental Protection and Energy

Joanne Roy, Consultant, Senate Budget Subcommittee #2 on Resources, Environmental Protection and Energy

Alf Brandt, Senior Counsel, Office of Assembly Speaker Rendon

Dennis O'Connor, Consultant, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee