[*Date*]

Department of Water Resources

Attention Delta Conveyance Office

P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

deltaconveyancecomments@water.ca.gov

cc: deltaconveyance@water.ca.gov

**Re: Delta Conveyance Project Draft Environmental Impact Report**

Dear Department of Water Resources:

[*On behalf of Group Name / As a concerned resident of \_\_\_*], I am writing to submit comments on the draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Delta Conveyance Project (Delta Tunnel). [*Describe your organization if any, and any personal qualifications or associations that may be relevant to your review of the DEIR and/or describe how the project would impact your personal life or resources that are important to you (e.g., water, wildlife, recreation, agriculture, etc.)*.]

In the 1980’s and again starting in 2006, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has been actively pursuing unsustainable isolated water conveyance that would remove freshwater flows from the Delta for the benefit of other parts of the state. The Delta Tunnel is the latest iteration, however, many of the impacts that plagued previous versions (the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and California WaterFix) are still present in the Delta Tunnel.

The DEIR is inadequate and fails to inform the public of the true extent of the environmental impacts as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As a California resident, I understand that the state faces a difficult task in combating the current water crisis. However, the Delta Tunnel would create a sacrifice zone in the Delta region from the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the project. Further, the cost of the Delta Tunnel is alarming and unaffordable.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The DEIR’s treatment of many impacts is misleading as it lowballs many impacts of the proposed project, precluding good faith review by the interested public. For instance, despite the project’s massive disturbances from construction of a 45-mile long, 39-foot outer diameter tunnel around the Delta, the DEIR claims that all biological impacts would be mitigated to less than significant levels. This is at best questionable. The impacts from construction would span a decade-plus and span thousands of acres of farmland, grasslands, wetlands and riparian habitat, disturbing and displacing wildlife.

The DEIR also fails to analyze the water quality, agricultural and other impacts associated with removing up to 6,000 cubic feet per second of water from the Sacramento River. Removing what is about one-third to one-half of the average flow of the river is sure to create increases in salinity as well as increase the incidence of harmful algal blooms (HABs). Yet the DEIR claims that these impacts will magically be less than significant and offering no mitigation measures for salinity or HABs.

Additionally, the DEIR does not adequately analyze and mitigate the impacts on Delta communities. A so-called “Community Benefits Program” would not even attempt to address the very real impacts to residents during and after construction. This is unacceptable given the extensive and lasting impacts the project would have in the region. For example, criteria and toxic air pollutants, including particulate matter, would increase, and at times double, across the region as a result of project construction, endangering the health of Delta residents.

The DEIR’s alternatives analysis is also lacking. The DEIR’s alternatives essentially provide various versions of the same tunnel project. There are no alternatives that describe other methods to meet the DWR’s water supply reliability goals. The DEIR ignores other, more environmentally friendly ways to make California’s water infrastructure more resilient without increasing reliance on Delta exports, which conflicts with the 2009 Delta Reform Act.

Overall, this project would create an environmental and socioeconomic disaster. Many of the environmental impacts, as well as the exorbitant cost, could be avoided by pursuing alternative, more sustainable, water projects. [I/we/group name] urge DWR to abandon the Delta Tunnel and pursue more stormwater capture, groundwater recharge, recycling and reuse, and water conservation that would not create as many significant environmental and other impacts on the California Delta.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this project and please add [me/us] to the notice list.

Sincerely,

Name

[*Role, Organization/Institution (if any)*]

Email

Mailing address

Phone (optional)

1. The latest cost estimate (not including finance costs) was approximately $16 billion; this estimate is sure to go up. <https://calmatters.org/environment/2022/06/california-water-delta-tunnel/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)