

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

WATER EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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BAY DELTA CONSERVATION PLAN MEETINGS

PUBLIC COMMENTS ONLY

FOR:

SAN JOSE

San Jose:

Chair: Thank you. Okay, again, I only have these four speaker cards. So I'll start with Walt Wadlow.

Mr. Wadlow: Sounds like I'm live, thank you. Good evening, I'm Walt Wadlow. I'm the Operations Manager for the Alameda County Water District. ACWD appreciates the opportunity this evening to offer comments at this EIR/EIS scoping meeting for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan effort currently underway. The reliability of water supplies conveyed through the Delta, and the health of the Delta ecosystem, are crucially important to the over 320,000 that we serve in the cities of Fremont, Newark, and Union City. Our customers depend on water from Sierra watershed, delivered through the State Water Project and the San Francisco Regional Water System for over half of our distribution system demands. We depend, as much as the Bay Area does, on water conveyed through the Delta and from tributaries to the Delta. And although the BDCP effort is focused on the statutory Delta, it's hard to believe that it will not eventually impact streams tributary to the Delta as well. ACWD believes that developing and implementing the Bay Delta Conservation Plan is a significant and important next step to improving our water supply

reliability and the health of the Delta ecosystem. The district's ratepayers have generously supported development of a diverse water supply portfolio, which includes local service water, desalinization of brackish groundwater, and banked water in semi-tropic water storage district, in addition to Sierra supplies. Ratepayers have also supported extensive water conservation efforts. Nevertheless, the district relies upon water conveyed through the Delta and from our Delta tributaries to supply our drinking water treatment facilities and to recharge our groundwater basin. As documented by numerous studies, the work presented tonight, and including the PPIC report on the Delta, the Delta is indeed broken. It can no longer support its water supply function, nor function as a healthy ecosystem for numerous wildlife species that depend on it. For these reasons, ACWD supports the Bay Delta Conservation Plan effort, and urges DWR and all the participants to dedicate the necessary resources to complete this important effort in a timely manner. As identified in the Delta Vision process, ACWD urges the BDCP effort to consider new Delta conveyance as part of the reasonable range of alternatives for the Delta. In addressing the ecosystem needs, ACWD urges that the effort look beyond the

existing pumps to evaluate the full range of impacts from other stressers affecting the Delta ecosystem. And further, that the effort consider the full range of potential mitigation strategies to address impacts associated with the covered activities. Finally, ACWD appreciates the continuing open public process being used for the BDCP and encourages the resources agency and DWR to continue what appears to be an effective approach for developing a realistic set of solutions for the problems in the Delta. Finally, on a personal note, I'm nearing the 20th year of my own involvement in Bay Delta issues, and I am optimistic for the BDCP effort in a way that I have not been for awhile, primarily for the process reasons that Carl Wilcox outlined, the fact that it is grounded in the HCP and NCC processes which provide, although complex, guidance both statutorily and from an administrative standpoint, so there's a roadmap for the participants this time. Whether you're a water agency, a resource agency, a wildlife agency, an NGO, or a private party, we have a set of guidelines and a set of rules this time to work by. So thank you.

Chair: Thank you. Scott Miller?

Mr. Miller: Good evening. My name's Scott Miller. I'm a member of the Northern California Chapter of the Federation of Fly Fishers. And I kind of represent them. I've represented them in the controversy of the San Luis Low Point Project, which has put us in conflict with the Santa Clara Valley Water District, and kind of leads to the one point I'd like to make tonight without having to get too deep into things. And that is, the problem is is that, as interested public, we don't trust you. And the reason we don't trust you is because we've been through the Cal Fed process and other plans and processes that have gone on before. The Delta didn't get broken in the last couple of years. The Delta got broken a long time ago, and people have been screaming and yelling about it for years. At the same time, the State Water Project people, the California Department of Water Resources, have been babying, kowtowing, to the large water users that I believe are the reason we're having this problem. The problem as far as I'm concerned is Westlands Irrigation District and other large irrigation districts that want water, and they want lots of water, and they want it cheap, and you guys want to give it to them. You want to stand behind the contracts that make no sense economically or morally for the people of California, but they do make sense for a

couple of thousand rich farmers. We're not happy with that. San Luis Reservoir was supposed to have a component for taking care of water usage by the public, recreation, etc., and now Westlands and some of these big districts, the State Water Project set, wants to take the last few drops out of that so that the system can be broken. That's the way the Delta feels. I mean as the Delta was being broken, you people were trying to take more than 6,500 cubic feet per second out of the Delta and raise it to 10,000. Now how can we trust this steering committee. I've got one minute left. The steering committee. Let me read who's on this steering committee. I have a real fear for this. Now I can't read it, my glasses aren't strong enough. Department of Water Resources, Bureau of Reclamation, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Kern County Water Agency, Metropolitan Water District, San Luis Delta-Mendota Water Authority, Westlands Water District, etc., etc., We don't trust these people. They're on the steering committee? They're the strongest voice on the steering committee. They've got the politics. They've got the money. They've got the greed. And we're tired of it. This had better not be Cal Fed all over again or it's a waste of time and it's a waste of money.

Chair: Thank you. Andrew Gear?

Mr. Gear: Good evening. My name is Andrew Gear, and I'm the Chief of Operations for San Jose Water Company, and I'm also the Chair of the Treated Water Subcommittee for the Santa Clara Valley Water District Retailers Association. And I'm here tonight speaking on behalf of both San Jose Water Company and the other retailers served by the district. San Jose Water Company's an (indiscernible) water utility and we're the largest retailer in Santa Clara County. We serve water to over a million people in the communities of San Jose, Los Gatos, Cupertino, Montessorino, Saratoga, and Campbell. Our mission is to provide a reliable supply of drinking water to our customers that meets the highest quality standard as well. And to that end, we're regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission, as well as the California Department of Public Health. About half the water that we supply to our customers in any given year arrives to us through the Delta, and we're keenly aware of the issues facing the Delta and the water supply reliability there, particularly as they're associated with the court rulings that are potentially restricting pumping for the protection of fish. This year, and going back to last year, the district has asked for a voluntary

10% conservation from our customers and all of the customers in the county, in part due to dry conditions, but more so because of uncertainties in the total annual allocations from the state and federal water projects, and possible supply interrupts due to Delta pumping restrictions. Under these challenging conditions, we have to rely more heavily on groundwater reserves that are maintained for drought purposes. In the absence of dependable, imported water supplies, overuse of the basins will ultimately result in basin overdraft, land subsidence, and water shortages, and some of these effects, we think, could be seen after just a few years of over pumping. Although our distribution system is built with considerable flexibility relative to source of supply, San Jose Water Company and several of our fellow retailers here in the Valley, have portions of our service areas that are directly reliant on Delta water supply provided by the district through their three treatment plants. And there's really no alternative supply for these parts of our systems if there were long-term Delta interruptions. So it's just critical that this problem is resolved for the day-to-day service of our customers. We support the water district's efforts to help find a comprehensive, cost-effective solution to Delta problems. We know

that doing nothing is not an option and that time is running out. The Delta needs a long-term, durable fix and it needs one immediately. We highly support the Bay Delta Conservation Plan because we believe it is the best opportunity to establish a plan that can stabilize both water supplies and fisheries in the Delta. Neither can afford to wait. Because the Bay Delta Conservation Plan provides benefits for all of California, it is our hope that the cost to implement the plan will be equitably shared among all the stakeholders. And thanks for the opportunity to comment tonight.

Chair: Thank you. Dale Meyers?

Mr. Meyers: Good evening. Dale Meyers, Livermore, California. In the interest of full disclosure for those of you who don't know me, I was the General Manager of Zone 7 Water Agency, which serves the cities of Pleasanton, Livermore, and Dublin from 1997 to 2007, and have sat in the past at the BDCP table. As a consequence, I'm very much aware that BDCP is not intended to solve all the problems of the Delta. There's not enough money for water agencies to do that, among other things. However, as we also know, there are a number of factors in the Delta, including among other things, wastewater disposal and agricultural drainage, that have impacts on Delta water

quality and on the Delta ecology in varying degrees these impacts, with or without their project's presence or operations. It is critical that this EIR/EIS process identify all of these other factors and assess to the greatest degree possible their individual and collective impacts in the Delta in order to be certain that an accurate assessment of the proportional impacts of the proposed alternative water conveyance and conservation actions that are being proposed will have. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. William Garbet, did I pronounce that right?

Mr. Garbet: I'm William Garbet, speaking on behalf of the Public. We're an environmental organization. And one of the things that you're doing is, the Delta is a vast project, and you have many good ideas, and I hope that you can implement a good fair share of them. However, the biggest problem that you're going to run into is what we call exigent circumstances, not just political, but weather induced by global warming. You're going to have huge variations where you're going to have torrential droughts and, you know, a few feet away total arid areas. And these are going to change just periodically without any rhyme, reason, or pattern. And a lot of this extends from back in 1958 Project Argos, which kind of destroyed the

ionosphere on to weather modifications, such as the cloud seeding that was done in the Santa Clara Valley Water District up until the floods of 1995, in which case I think they decided the liabilities are not worth it. You have to also look at what the Santa Clara Valley Water District has done. They've been playing the peas under a pod and the shell game, just moving things around on water rights and water transfers, rather than building reservoirs or collection from time to time. And since some large reservoirs are impractical, they haven't even built small ones. You look at recharging of the aquifers. For Freeway 85, is rather than, for instance, recharging into the upper brackish water table, they actually went down in the drinking water levels and then they had to go and disinfect periodically such as they've done over at their San Tomas pumping facility. And therefore, recharging to the deep aquifers is not practical, but in the brackish areas it will filter on down and it will be clean water by the time it gets there. Also the brackish water goes and disinfects any bacteriological agents in the water. We look at what they're doing in the Coyote Valley or attempting to do here in Santa Clara Valley. What they're doing is they're roping off and making a big pond out there for "recreation" for real estate

developers with no outlet, and they're taking the brackish water that is coming from energy power plants and dumping it all in one plant. It's no wonder the Coyote Plant has not flown. And you have to look this water coming down through the Delta and adjust what is going on on the level of salinity as your progress, whether you call it a peripheral canal, or whatever, you will have stages or steps in flood control and tide basins that you're going to have to look at. But I wish you luck on your project, because it's a rather volatile political process, particularly after the legacy of the peripheral canal that's still with us. And I'm sure some of the lessons with Cal Fed you are not going to repeat. And I wish you luck. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. Bruce Lechevski?

Mr. Lechevski: Close enough, thank you very much. Hi, I'm Bruce Lechevski. Welcome to our valley. I teach environmental studies at San Jose State. Years ago, in the 1980's, I helped set up the first citywide water conservation program for the City of San Jose. So I have some experience with urban water conservation. But urban water conservation in the big picture is really a pretty futile thing to do, because 85% of the water in the state, as I'm sure you know, is agriculture. And so I have to sympathize with the California Fly

Fishermen, even though I don't like to go fly fishing because my daughter embarrasses me because she catches the fish and I don't. And so my issue here is that, one of the problems that we have is that water quality, first of all, is so poor that we have an issue with trihelamethanes, as I'm sure you know, and so we still have to improve the quality of water so that we can reduce trihelamethanes, which are a carcinogen and may become a legal issue certainly in this area. Secondly, we have more water being consumed for alfalfa than all of Los Angeles, all of San Diego, all of San Diego County, all of San Francisco, times two, and that's just fundamentally wrong. And so the four major water using crops, alfalfa, irrigated pasture, rice, cotton, if you look at those things, if those farmers would like to use those crops I think they ought to pay for it. When you look at that agriculture consuming 85% of the water produces about 3% of the state GDP, when you're looking at this valley here that is driving the economy of the state that is the sixth largest economy in the world, there's just something wrong. And when we have this process 100 years? We're going to have an earthquake in the next, what, 30 years, 100% chance that I read in the paper? We can't wait this long. We need to move quicker. We need to get water quality.

We need to deal with these issues much quicker. And if the water districts down there want that water, then let them pay for it. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you. I don't have any other speaker cards. Is there anyone else who would like to make a comment? Oh, here we go. Thank you. Go ahead.

Mr. Long: Thank you. My name's Chuck Long. I represent myself, but I'm a property owner up in Contra Costa County. And I followed the water diversions from a few of the pumping plants and I water ski past them frequently. Carl mentioned something about preferred water conveyance approach. Are you referring to another resurgence of the peripheral canal, and could you explain how some of the newer convergence approaches are going to affect us?

Chair: I'm sorry if I didn't make it clear before. We're not really going to do Q and A here. But if this sort of wraps things up, we're going to stay and we'll be happy to answer a lot more questions. Would you have any more comments that you'd like to make?

Mr. Long: Probably (indiscernible)

Chair: Okay, okay. Okay, are there any other comments for tonight?

Okay, with that we will adjourn the comment session. I want to

thank you all very much for coming and for participating and for taking the time to become familiar with the BDCP and we hope you continue to participate. Thank you very much.

-- MEETING ADJOURNED --