

Dear Dale Hoffman-Floerke, CA Dept. of Water Resources,

I am writing to offer my comments on the Salton Sea Restoration Program DPEIR. The State of California must take action to preserve critical wildlife habitat in the Salton Sea, unfortunately, none of the alternatives presented in the DPEIR adequately protect wildlife habitat, air and water quality. Therefore, I urge the Resources Agency to consider combining the best features from the proposed alternatives into a final, preferred alternative that would meet the needs for habitat restoration and protect local and regional air and water quality.

Alternatives 1 and 2 provide important habitat to support many of the birds that currently use the Salton Sea. Alternative 4 offers a relatively low-cost, low-impact method to distribute water around much of the present shoreline and would provide additional habitat, shoreline protection and opportunities for recreation. The concentric lakes plan would provide direct air quality benefits, and would also offer a ready source of water for managing air quality problem areas that might arise in the future. Components of the larger north lake alternatives (Alternatives 5-7) provide recreation and economic development opportunities, enjoying the broad local support necessary for funding and implementation of the needed restoration.

Specifically, I encourage the Resources Agency to adopt a final, preferred alternative that includes the following:

- Between 25,000 and 50,000 acres of Shallow Saline Habitat Complex, as described in Alternatives 1 and 2, at the southern and northern ends of the Sea to provide habitat for shoreline species;
- Creation of concentric rings using geotubes or other dirt-filled barriers, as described in Alternative 4, to provide additional shallow habitat, deeper marine habitat, shoreline and view protection, air-quality protections, and recreation;
- Creation of a large North Lake, similar to those found in Alternatives 5-7, to provide recreation and development opportunities without the costs and risks associated with a major mid-Sea barrier or the costs of pumping water from the southern end of the Sea;
- Adequate water per acre of exposed seabed, as stipulated by the Salton Sea Advisory Committee, to prevent dust pollution caused by exposed playa, as described in Alternatives 1-3, 5-6 and 8;
- Construct shallow saline habitat immediately to provide resources for birds during the long permitting and construction process; and
- Develop a plan that prioritizes use of water for habitat and air quality mitigation first, in case of possible shortages or system malfunctions, as described in Alternatives 1-3.

A Final Preferred Alternative that contains all of these components, each of which is present and analyzed in one or more of the draft alternatives, would best meet the legal requirements to maximize habitat, air quality and water quality, while also providing substantial recreation and development opportunities. I urge the Resources Agency to provide a proposal with the components and features outlined above as the final, preferred alternative, and I urge the State to select this alternative that will best protect wildlife habitat and air and water quality at a reasonable cost and in a reasonable time frame.