

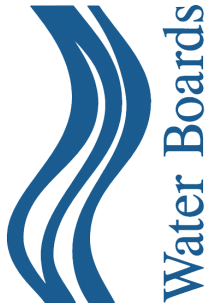


State Water Resources Control Board

1001 I Street • Sacramento, California 95814

Phone: (916) 341-5254 Fax: (916) 341-5252

Web site: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov> • Email: info@waterboards.ca.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 18, 2008
SWRCB 08-008

Contact: Dave Clegern
916-327-8239

STATE WATER BOARD VOTES TO ADOPT WORK PLAN FOR BAY DELTA RESCUE

SACRAMENTO—The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) voted unanimously on Wednesday, July 16, 2008 to approve a work plan to increase its efforts to improve water quality and habitat in the overburdened San Francisco Bay-Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta (the Delta). In recent years Delta fisheries, specifically salmon and smelt, have suffered a catastrophic population decline. These conditions have become a critical environmental and economic issue for the state.

The State Water Board has primary regulatory authority over both water supply and water quality in California. The work plan specifies a comprehensive list of activities the State Water Board is currently taking or will take to improve and protect the beneficial uses of water in the Delta. The State Water Board exercises authority through water quality plans, issuing water right and water discharge permits, and enforcement action against illegal uses of water and discharges of wastes.

The work plan will guide the State Water Board, as well as the San Francisco and Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Boards, in establishing and implementing protective, scientifically valid objectives for the Delta. The Boards will evaluate options within their areas of authority to determine how to best work with stakeholders to restore Delta conditions, balance competing needs and protect all uses of water for the benefit of the State's citizens.

“We want this to be an inclusive process, but the Delta is in crisis, and we recognize the need to act quickly,” said State Water Board Chair Tam Doduc. The State Water Board will look at how its authority in water rights and enforcement of water quality standards can best be brought to bear on the problems in the Delta. The problems include depleted and endangered fisheries, salinity and alleged unauthorized diversions.

The State Water Board plans to release a notice for an October public workshop to move forward on one of the activities called for in the Bay-Delta workplan – consideration of mandatory conservation practices. Water conservation can stretch our water supplies and help mitigate stresses on the fragile delta.

(continued on next page)

The work plan also calls for hearings before the end of the year to establish the scientific information needed to prioritize threats to the Delta. “There are a lot of claims on all sides of the problem, and we want to sort out what the science does, or doesn’t tell us”, said State Water Board Vice-Chair Gary Wolff.

The State Water Resources Control Board’s mission is to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California’s water resources, and ensure their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.

###