

- **Board of Directors**
Water Planning and Stewardship Committee

March 11, 2008 Board Meeting

9-4

Subject

Update report on the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force Delta Vision Report, the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan and conveyance options

Description

Overview

In June 2007, the Board approved a Delta Action Plan that provides a framework for actions to build a sustainable Delta and reduce conflicts. In September 2007, the Board adopted additional principles to further clarify Metropolitan's position on Delta conveyance options related to implementation of a long-term Delta improvement plan. The Board principles also established a process where Metropolitan staff would seek board direction to assist in moving forward on key issues including: conveyance improvements, governance, legislation, and legal and regulatory decisions.

Consistent with these existing board principles, staff is reporting on the key points of agreement, summarized below, for moving forward with the water supply conveyance and environmental improvements outlined in the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force Delta Vision Report

(http://www.deltavision.ca.gov/BlueRibbonTaskForce/FinalVision/Delta_Vision_Final.pdf)

and the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan's Key Points of Agreement

(http://resources.ca.gov/bdcp/docs/BDCP-Points_of_Agreement_Final.pdf).

Feasibility and technical analyses of the Delta conveyance and environmental alternatives were conducted by Metropolitan staff and by an independent consulting firm hired by the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan Steering Committee. The analyses indicate that a dual-intake conveyance approach would allow the greatest flexibility in meeting water demands by taking water where and when it is least harmful to migrating salmon and in-Delta fish species. It would also reduce longer-term risks associated with seismic-induced flooding and sea-level rise. Furthermore, this conveyance option would provide the ability to restore fishery habitat throughout the Delta and minimize disruption to tidal food web processes. These improvements resulting from this new conveyance approach are consistent with the criteria the Board adopted in September 2007 related to implementation of long-term conveyance alternatives. Staff will be presenting results from this analysis at the March board meeting.

Recent Points of Agreement Regarding Conveyance by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force and the Bay-Delta Conversation Plan Steering Committee

In November 2007, the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan Steering Committee (which consists of state/federal agencies, water users, and environmental interests) adopted key points of agreement for moving forward with analyzing and implementing water supply and environmental improvements as part of the conservation planning effort. In these points of agreement, the Steering Committee agreed that the "most promising approach for achieving the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan conservation and water supply goals involves a conveyance system with new points of diversions."

The Steering Committee also agreed that "the main new physical feature of this conveyance system includes the construction and operation of a new point (or points) of diversion in the north Delta on the Sacramento River and an isolated conveyance facility around the Delta. Modifications to existing south Delta facilities to reduce entrainment and otherwise improve the State Water Project's and Central Valley Project's ability to convey water through the Delta while contributing to near- and long-term conservation and water supply goals will also be

evaluated. This approach may provide enhanced operational flexibility and greater opportunities for habitat improvements and fishery protection.”

Also in November 2007, the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force released a report that recommended 12 long-term actions and 7 near-term actions as part of their approach to develop a durable vision for sustainable management of the Delta. The conveyance improvement recommendations state the need for “an assessment of a dual-conveyance system as the preferred direction, focused on understanding the optimal combination of through-Delta and isolated facility improvements.” The Task Force further recommended that a process be launched to urgently assemble available information to allow selection of a preferred alternative by June 2008.

Joint Technical & Environmental Analyses

To assist in moving forward with necessary Delta improvements and develop accurate and timely information, staff is participating in joint technical and environmental analyses with State and Federal export water contractors. These contractors are cooperatively funding consultant services and providing internal staffing resources.

Efforts that this cooperative group is participating in include the Governor’s Delta Vision Process and Implementation Plan, the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan, the Department of Water Resources Delta Emergency Response Plan, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation’s Operations Criteria and Plan (OCAP) to acquire regulatory permits for water supply operations.

Background – Existing Board Adopted Bay-Delta Policy Criteria

In June 2007, Metropolitan’s Board approved a Delta Action Plan that provides a framework for actions to build a sustainable Delta and reduce conflicts between water supply conveyance and the environment. This framework is comprised of the following three components:

- Short-Term Action Plan. Actions over the next 18 months to secure short-term permits for operating the State Water Project Banks’ Pumping Plant and avoiding incidental take of threatened or endangered species; implementing/funding a Delta Levee Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan; and selection and approval of key elements of the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan and long-term Delta Vision.
- Mid-Term Action Plan. Actions prior to a long-term Delta solution to secure long-term operating permits for the State Water Project under the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan; develop an implementation plan and environmental documentation for the preferred long-term Delta Vision; and implementation of early start “no regrets” ecosystem restoration projects.
- Long-Term Action Plan. Actions to fully implement, govern and finance the elements of a long-term Delta Vision. These elements include water quality/supply infrastructure, Delta habitat protection and restoration, flood control and levees, and others.

The approved Delta Action Plan also established a process where staff would provide monthly updates to the Board on Delta-related processes and would seek board direction on key issues including: Bay-Delta legislation, administrative decision processes, and legal and regulatory decisions. In July and August 2007, staff provided written reports and reviewed with the Board potential near-, mid-, and long-term actions, and their water supply, water quality, and environmental implications and costs. Staff has also provided oral updates at the Board’s monthly Water Planning and Stewardship Committee meeting.

In September 2007, the Board adopted additional criteria to further clarify Metropolitan’s position on Delta conveyance options related to implementation of a long-term Delta improvement plan. These criteria include:

1. Provide Water Supply Reliability. Conveyance options need to provide water supply reliability consistent with DWR’s 2005 State Water Project Reliability Report.
2. Improve Export Water Quality. Conveyance options should reduce bromide and dissolved organic carbon concentrations. Existing in-Delta intakes cause direct conflict between the need to reduce organic carbon to meet stricter urban drinking water standards, and the need to increase carbon to promote a healthy food web for fish.

3. Allow Flexible Pumping Operations in a Dynamic Fishery Environment. Water supply conveyance options should allow the greatest flexibility in meeting water demands by taking water where and when it is least harmful to migrating salmon and in-Delta fish species. All options should reduce the inherent conflict between fisheries and water conveyance.
4. Enhance Fishery Habitat Throughout Delta. Conveyance options should provide the ability to restore fishery habitat throughout the entire Delta (not just in partial areas) and minimize disruption to tidal food web processes, and provide for fluctuating salinity levels.
5. Reduce Seismic Risks. Conveyance options should provide significant reductions in risks to export water supplies from seismic-induced levee failure and flooding.
6. Reduce Climate Change Risks. Conveyance options should reduce long-term risks from salinity intrusion associated with rising sea levels. Intake locations should be able to withstand an estimated 1- to 3-foot sea level rise in the next 100 years.

Future Board Direction on Other Key Policy Issues

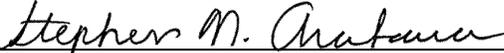
As outlined in Metropolitan’s Delta Action Plan, staff will seek board direction on other key issues including funding for environmental restoration, governance and financing issues, sizing and location of an isolated facility components, potential legislation, and other key components of the Governor’s overall Delta Vision.

Policy

By Minute Item 45753, dated May 11, 2004, and Minute Item 46637, dated April 11, 2006, the Board adopted a set of Delta policy principles to ensure a solid foundation for development of future Metropolitan positions and to provide guidance to Metropolitan staff.

By Minute Item 47135, dated May 25, 2007, the Board supported, in principle, the proposed Delta Action Plan, as set forth in the letter signed by the General Manager.

By Minute Item 47232, dated September 11, 2007, the Board adopted criteria for support of conveyance options in implementation of a long-term Delta improvement plan.


 _____ 3/4/2008
 Stephen N. Arakawa Date
 Manager, Water Resource Management


 _____ 3/4/2008
 Jeffrey Lightlinger Date
 General Manager