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**From:** mary mctaggart [mailto:cavelanding@yahoo.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, December 18, 2008 11:22 AM

**To:** Context, DeltaVision@CALFED

**Subject:** Comments to Delta Vision Committee - December 16, 2008

(Comments delivered in person during Public Comment period, Delta Vision Committee Meeting, December 16, 2008)

Greetings to you, Secretary Chrisman, and members of the Delta Vision Committee. My name is Mary McTaggart. I am a Delta resident from the Clarksburg area in the North Delta. Like many of my Delta neighbors, I am pretty concerned about the coming impacts of the many Delta initiatives on our lives, families, livelihoods, and communities.

One of my concerns is the large amount of governmental oversight the Strategic Plan envisions for the Delta. As the Sacramento Bee reported in its Delta supplement on Sunday, farming is the foundation of the Delta's economy, with recreation a distant second. Success in farming depends on responding to both the rhythms and surprises of Nature, and the changing requirements of markets, neither of which wait around for decisions made on a government time-table. To the extent that Delta agriculture finds itself more and more subject to governmental interference and direction in pursuit of the overarching co-equal goals, to that extent it will lose its ability to be innovative, productive, and resilient. The Strategic Plan also obviously favors a not-so-subtle shift of Delta agriculture toward farming for "public benefits", none of which actually feed people, in spite of the fact that the state's population has doubled in 40 years and we are in a global food crisis. Please make a strong case for keeping Delta farmland in private hands, and Delta agricultural enterprise as free as possible of excessive governmental intervention.

In addition, on the subject of governance, please do what you can to ensure that adequate and secure funding for it is nailed down before the fact, not after. Authority to enforce does not always, nor even very often, mean actual enforcement. Government is big on enacting, but woeful on enforcement, usually due in great part to lack of funding. Such a situation demoralizes those who are trying to comply, and encourages those who are not. Please do what you can to see that any Delta governance that is enacted can actually do its job.

I also hope you will stress to the Governor and the legislature the concerns voiced by the Delta County Supervisors on December 5. Supervisor Ruhstaller said it best when he maintained that the actions the State plans in the Delta are "doable better with us than without us or against us". Including in-Delta interests as partners in planning isn't just a question of fairness or transparency. As someone else said that day, planners will have only one chance to get this right. May I suggest, then, that you actually need the expertise and experience of in-Delta interests with the Delta environment more than you know, or seem willing to acknowledge. If you intend to "save" the Delta, you need

everyone on board to get it done - including, and especially, Delta farmers and landowners, recreation groups, reclamation districts, businesses, citizen organizations, counties, and Farm Bureaus. In the interests of achieving a plan that will work, please make a strong recommendation that the implementing entities have robust local representation, a good part of it elected from within the Delta. In-Delta interests shouldn't have to beat on the doors to get a hearing; you might want to be seeking them out instead - and sooner rather than later.

I would also like to lend support to a remark of Anson Moran of the Delta Wetlands project on December 5. He said more attention needs to be paid to the preservation of the physical Delta. How will it look after these massive facilities - the canal(s) and 100,000 acres of habitat - are in place? These facilities have the potential to literally shatter and shred the physical landscape of the Delta, yet there seems to be little in the plan that gives any thought to how the pieces will be preserved while all this is going on, or how they will be put back together again once it is accomplished. This plan purports to return parts of the Delta to a more natural state, yet not nearly enough is known about its present state, nor about how to "fix it", to even contemplate meaningful action. Yet political realities are demanding action. The BDCP, probably the most complex HCP ever attempted, will be done in a mere 2 years, yet a couple of independent biologists I have heard said it should take much longer - up to 10 years. Unfortunately, Nature does not accommodate itself to political considerations or quick fixes.

You may wonder why we care so much, since consideration of the planned facilities may take decades, but quite a few Delta families have lived on this land for as many as six or seven generations, so they take a long and loving view. We hope that those who are working to save the Delta will take a similar stance toward its future.

With regard to some of what has been presented this morning:

- The proposed new membership of the DPC includes three representatives from Delta cities. Be aware that the only incorporated city in the Primary Zone of the Delta is Isleton, and there is some question whether it will remain incorporated over the long haul.
- Be aware also that many landowners are already paying recently-instituted fees for both water quality and water rights.
- Also, not all reclamation district board or trustees are elected - it depends on the details of the RD's original formation.

Yours truly,

Mary McTaggart