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December 3, 2008

Secretary Mike Chrisman, Chair
Delta Vision Committee
1415 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Chrisman:

The people who live, work and play in the Delta are deeply attached to the place. We have an enormous stake in the outcome of your recommendations on the implementation the Delta Vision Strategic Plan. We also have made a contribution to the success of Delta Vision process through participation in the Stakeholder Coordination Group (SCG) and will continue to due so as we move to implementation.

As one who has lived in the Delta for 42 years and has previously served as mayor of Rio Vista and member of the Delta Protection Commission and the Delta Vision Stakeholder Coordination Group, and who continues to serve as a member of CalFed's Delta Habitat and Levees Subcommittee and the Delta Risk Management Strategy ("DRMS") Steering Committee, I offer the following comments on the Delta Vision Strategic Plan and the Committee's staff draft Interim Implementation Plan ("the draft).

1. DELTA LEVEES KEY TO PROTECTING STATEWIDE, REGIONAL AND LOCAL VALUES.

While the above proposition is already recognized in state law (see Water Code Section 12981), currently there is great uncertainty in the Delta community with respect to the state's long-term commitment to maintain the Delta 's levees. The third bullet on page 1 fails to provide any assurance of the purposes or goals of the yet to determined DWR's "Delta Levee Policy Interim Investment Strategy." To say that limited bond funds should be allocated to implement DWR's "adopted Investment Strategy," begs the question of what this Investment Strategy is or will be. I respectfully submit that the Committee needs to clarify the draft recommendation to provide DWR clear policy direction on the goals to be achieved by the strategy. I suggest adding the language in the Delta Vision Strategic Plan found at Strategy 6.3, p.114: "State funding should be directed primarily to levees that support state interests (enumerated) and that support the cultural, historical, and aesthetic value of the Delta as place." I understand these Delta values by implication to include agriculture, which underlies our local culture and history and, I submit, our aesthetic value.

Furthermore, the Task Force Strategic Plan (Action 6.3.1) specifically states that DWR should develop the Investment Strategy "in cooperation with local Reclamation Districts and other agencies." I respectfully recommend that the Committee should expressly mention the Reclamation Districts, both in this recommendation and in the later draft recommendation with respect to the development of the CDEW plan by the proposed Delta Policy Group and others. In my experience, it is critical to have the local knowledge and expertise of the RDs and their engineers fully engaged in any discussion of Delta levees, including strategic investments. (The

Resources Agency Delta Levees & Habitat and the BDPAC Levees subcommittees meet together monthly and provide a key forum in which to engage the RDs on these topics.)

2. THERE CAN BE NO "DELTA AS PLACE" WITHOUT RELIABLE LEVEES.

The members of the "Delta as Place" work group appointed by the Blue Ribbon Task Force recommended (with one dissent) that the Strategic Plan adopt PL 84-99 as the minimum standard for Delta levee protection. The work group recommendation reflects a grass roots understanding of the complex geography, historic settlement patterns, current levee conditions and the layout of roads, highways and bridges of the Delta. (The CalFed Record of Decision also adopted PL 84-99 as the goal for Delta levees.) Unfortunately, the HMP minimum standard adopted by the Task Force is wholly inadequate to meet the other Task Force's other goals reflected in the Delta as Place strategies and actions.

While the Delta as Place work group agreed that it is wise to discourage suburbanization of land on deeply subsided land behind levees, we also agreed that our Delta heritage towns must be able to revitalize over time with some limited growth and renewal at slow historic rates. Higher levels of protection beyond the minimum levee standards (whether HMP or PL 84-99) will be required to adequately protect these people and their property over time. If state policy limits future development in the heritage towns (and, as a result, the development fees that might otherwise might be available to fund levee protection), then the state should commit to providing financial assistance beyond what can be raised locally to maintain the towns' levees in order to assure their economic viability and the safety of residents and visitors alike.

3. ECONOMIC INVESTMENT IN THE DELTA REQUIRES ADEQUATE STATE AND LOCAL TRANSPORTATION (AND LEVEE) INFRASTRUCTURE.

The current Delta economy is based upon agriculture, natural gas, recreation and tourism. The staff draft recommendation directs the Secretaries of BT& H and F&A to work with DPC, Delta COGs and counties to develop a regional economic plan that would be consistent with the CDEW Plan. It will be essential for this economic plan to include the long-term commitment to maintain the bridges roads and state highways needed to get people and products in and out of the Delta. The state highways serve as a vital link between the Bay Area and Central Valley and thus support the larger inter-regional and Northern California economies. No other interstate or state highways can absorb the regional traffic that would be redirected as the result of losing these Delta highways. All of these transportation facilities are dependent on the integrity of the levees.

4. A FULLY INTEGRATED EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN IS URGENTLY NEEDED.

While DWR has been working on its own emergency plan as described in the staff draft, the Delta Protection Commission is also working with OES and all of the relevant federal, state and local agencies to develop and implement a fully integrated and operational emergency preparedness and response plan. The DPC plan recognizes the importance of integration of public safety agencies charged with assisting with local emergency preparedness and the evacuation and sheltering of the public. This separate but related emergency plan needs the Committee's explicit

support to make sure that it is adequately funded and expedited in the near-term. Implementation of any emergency plan will rely on multiple ways to get materials and people in and out of the affected area, and urgently requires all-agency advance planning and practice and citizen education and engagement to be effective.

5. A DELTA CONSERVANCY MUST INCLUDE LOCAL REPRESENTATION AND EXPERTISE.

I fully support the establishment of a Delta Conservancy and have for many years. I support the draft recommendation that the membership of the governing board should be a mix of state and local appointees.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Delta Vision process. I look forward to working with you again as the effort to implement the Vision moves forward.

Sincerely,

Marci Coglianese

C: Senator Pat Wiggins
Senator Lois Wolk
Assembly Member Mariko Yamada
Supervisor Mike Reagan
Mayor Jan Vick