

December 4, 2008

Mr. Phil Isenberg
Chair
Blue Ribbon Task Force
Delta Vision
650 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Isenberg:

I am writing in response to the final draft of the Delta Vision Task Force Strategic Plan.

Our first comment is in regard to information requests. Starting early in 2007, Restore the Delta made it clear that decisions regarding conveyance for the Delta could not be made in a credible way until research answered a vitally important question: How much water is needed to sustain and restore the Delta? Despite our numerous public requests for this information, and assurances from Leo Winternitz that this information would be forthcoming, we have never received from the Blue Ribbon Task Force, DWR, or Secretary Chrisman's office an answer to this essential question.

Nonetheless, the Blue Ribbon Task Force is advocating a plan for the Delta that allows for the last major source of fresh water to be diverted from the Delta because experts "believe" that this will improve the Delta's ecosystem. Where is the verifiable, scientific proof?

Initially, Restore the Delta applauded attempts to address Delta governance through the Strategic Plan. However, the outcome is extremely disappointing. While the Strategic Plan recognizes that the State Water Resources Control Board needs reform, it adds new layers of political appointees to further complicate Delta governance and excludes meaningfully local Delta representation. Restore the Delta maintains that The State Water Resources Control Board must be empowered to enforce existing water codes regarding water quality and quantity. *A fully-funded SWRCB enforcement staff must operate independently of board members charged with creating regulations and water rights decisions.* And SWRCB Board positions should be elected positions, rather than political appointments. Any new Delta agencies led by political appointees will further complicate governance until reforms of the SWRCB are enacted.

Regarding governance of a Delta conservancy, your recommendations ignore local Delta expertise and input. We advocate creation of a conservancy that will ensure local control of the Delta, prevent forced access to private land, protect the

continuity of the Delta, mediate purchases of agricultural land, identify restoration projects and enhance existing public access, and provide funding for levee maintenance. *We urge support for Delta landowners who maintain levees for the benefit of the Delta, adjacent communities, and regional infrastructure.*

Needless to say, Restore the Delta full opposes the Strategic Plan's policy of "Do Not Repair" for some Delta islands. By adopting this as an immediate policy, the state will not have the proper motivation to work out which islands need full protection and which ones can be transformed back to habitat without harming Delta communities, or at least minimizing environmental and economic impacts on Delta communities.

Other public comments made by Tom Zuckerman and John Herrick also represent the views of Restore the Delta.

In conclusion, the Delta Vision Strategic Plan does not represent the interests of the people of the Delta, and it does not provide sound measures to restore the Delta's fisheries. Instead, you will find attached a copy of Restore the Delta's Campaign Platform. Our platform encompasses what Delta communities and Delta fisheries need first. If these points were to be enacted on first and the people of the Delta were to be adequately represented and listened to in decision making processes, further restoration and policy decisions influencing the Delta's future could then be made successfully.

Respectfully yours,

Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla
Campaign Director
Restore the Delta