

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **BAY-DELTA AUTHORITY ADOPTS DELTA IMPROVEMENTS PACKAGE**

*Actions will protect environment, improve water supply reliability*

Sacramento –The California Bay-Delta Authority this week adopted a plan that will guide state and federal efforts to dramatically improve water supply reliability and water quality, and to protect and enhance the levee system and the environment in the San Francisco-San Joaquin Bay-Delta over the next five years.

Known as the Delta Improvements Package, the plan details the schedules and linkages between a number of actions that will be undertaken by state and federal agencies responsible for water project operations and environmental regulatory compliance.

The Package outlines conditions under which the state Department of Water Resources (DWR) would be allowed to increase its permitted pumping capacity from 6,680 cubic-feet-per-second (cfs) to 8,500 cfs. Among those conditions are:

- Development of a salinity management plan for the San Joaquin River,
- Improvements to protect water quality near the Contra Costa Canal,
- Environmental protection for important native fish species including implementation of the Ecosystem Restoration Program, and
- Development of a long-term Environmental Water Account to protect fish and help ensure water supply reliability.

In addition, the agencies will continue to conduct workshops, studies, independent reviews, and other activities to evaluate the relationship between water project operations, water quality, and biological resources, and to incorporate the best available scientific information into their planning and regulatory activities.

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## **Bay-Delta Authority Meeting 2-2-2**

“This Package of actions and linkages, grounded by the best available science, represents a dramatic step forward in the way we manage water projects and protect the environment,” said Patrick Wright, director of the California Bay-Delta Authority.

The elements outlined in the package still must undergo extensive public review before they can be implemented. “Not only will there be public workshops and meetings with various stakeholder groups, but the projects also – where applicable – must meet state and federal environmental permitting requirements,” Wright said.

In addition to the specific actions called for in the Delta Improvements Package, the Authority also approved a set of annual program plans developed by the 25 state and federal agencies that are charged with implementing the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.

The CALFED Program is an unprecedented effort among state and federal agencies, urban, agricultural and environmental stakeholders, and the public to resolve some of California’s long-standing water issues through a collaborative, non-regulatory approach to problem-solving. The Authority is the state agency responsible for overseeing the CALFED Program.

During its two-day meeting (Aug. 11-12) in Sacramento, the Authority also approved a \$4.5 million grant to monitor mercury in sportfish and other species in the Bay-Delta system and to work with the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) to evaluate risk and update fish consumption advisories and develop other public outreach about potential hazards.

In addition, the Authority approved two grant programs that will help implement ecosystem restoration and fund the scientific studies to guide the overall direction of the CALFED Program. Beginning in September, up to \$20 million will be available from Prop. 50 for ecosystem monitoring grants and \$19 million for science grants.

Details on the Aug. 11-12 meeting and additional information about the grant programs are available at the California Bay-Delta Authority website at <http://calwater.ca.gov>. Information about the application of science to water management and the Delta can be found at: <http://science.calwater.ca.gov>.

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The California Bay-Delta Program is a cooperative effort of more than 20 state and federal agencies working with local communities to improve the quality and reliability of California’s water supplies and revive the San Francisco Bay-Delta ecosystem. The Bay-Delta plan is the largest, most comprehensive water management effort in the nation.