

Tell Gavin Newsom to Stop the Delta Tunnel and Change Course on California Water

Attend the Delta Tunnel Hearing at the Sheraton Inn at the Sundial Bridge on March 2nd; Rally and Press Conference at 5:30pm, Public comment at 6pm

California's salmon rivers are at a crisis point. A recent report stated over 45% of California's fisheries are facing extinction within 50 years. The Klamath River spring chinook and coho salmon are currently facing extinction, and the Sacramento River/ Bay Delta winter run salmon, Spring Salmon, delta smelt, and green sturgeon are all imperiled. Loss of habitat, low river flows and poor water quality are the main issues impacting the fish in both watersheds. The Trinity River, the Klamath's largest tributary, has been dammed and diverted to the Sacramento River, and is delivered to Central Valley Project contractors such as the Westlands Water District. The Bay Delta, Sacramento River and Klamath-Trinity River salmon declines are connected to overallocation of water to the Central Valley Project and State Water Project.

This situation has been made much worse by bad water management during recent droughts and ocean impacts from climate change. Even fish that are not endangered such as the Klamath and Trinity River fall run Chinook are facing rapidly dwindling numbers, which means that members of California's three largest Tribes, the Yurok, Hoopa Valley, and Karuk Tribes do not have access to an essential food source. Most Delta and Sacramento River Tribes have not had access to salmon for many decades. Commercial fishing and coastal communities are also suffering from the economic impacts from loss of salmon. This year only 47,261 salmon returned to the Klamath and Trinity Rivers out of the 97,912 that were predicted. This severely impacted people in Northern California and Southern Oregon. All available science points to the fact that floodplain and estuary restoration, access to cold water habitat and improved flows will be essential if salmon are to survive climate change in California

Luckily Californians are saving water and support conservation to save the environment. Unfortunately, large water brokers and corporate agriculture interests, such as the Westlands Water District, know there is money to be made from water. In 2017 Donald Trump appointed a Westlands Water District lobbyist, David Bernhardt to head the Department of Interior, and he has created several new plans and rules that would harm California's salmon. California's Governor, Gavin Newsom has also prioritized water deliveries over the environment thus far, but did recently challenge one of these plans in court.

Currently proposed state and federal processes threaten California's rivers include;

- * The Trump Water Plan for Long Term Operations of the Central Valley Project,
- * Shasta Dam Enlargement,
- * The Long Term Operations of the State Water Project,
- * The Proposed Sites Reservoir,
- * The Twin Tunnels proposal, which is now the One Tunnel,
- * The Westlands Water District and other CVP water district permanent water contracts,
- * The Governor's Water Resilience Portfolio. This document lays out the Governor's water priorities and the one tunnel proposal and Sites Reservoir are top priorities in the document.

These projects are all connected as the Sites Reservoir project and its new diversions, the Trump water plan, and the Long Term Operations of the State Water Project would allow more water to be diverted and stored from the Trinity and Sacramento River systems and Bay Delta, and the tunnel would allow this water to be moved south. The Governor's water portfolio and Trump actions make sure all of these new reservoirs and diversions are prioritized on the state and federal level above salmon and communities.

The Governor's Water Portfolio

The governor had meetings all over the state, except in the North West part of the state to help define priorities for his water portfolio. He blew off most environmental and North state input and came up with a plan that does include water savings and reuse, but also prioritizes accelerated permitting for Sites Reservoir, voluntary agreements instead of regulations on flows, and a massive new one tunnel project from the North Bay Delta. Comments were due on February 7th on this plan. It has not been finalized.

Sites Reservoir.

Sites Reservoir would be a 14.7 billion dollar 1.8 million acre foot, 14,000 acre reservoir off of the Sacramento River. This is about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the size of Shasta Reservoir. It would impound several creeks that are located on the river below the Trinity River diversion. The plan to fill the Sites Reservoir includes adding a large new diversion and two new large pumps at an existing diversion on the Sacramento River.

A hydrologist's report that Save California Salmon commissioned shows that the Sites reservoirs diversions would increase temperatures in the Trinity River, harming salmon. The report also shows that Trinity River reservoir storage and Humboldt County's water right and the Lower Klamath long term plan are not protected. This report is the basis of calls by Tribes, environmental groups, fishermen and Humboldt county for the Sites Authority to issue a revised/recirculated Draft EIS/EIR for the Sites Reservoir. Recently the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to ask the Site's Authority to re-do their environmental documents and water rights paperwork in order to protect the Trinity River, and their water rights. Hoopa High School and Trinidad elementary students positively influenced that vote by testifying. Unfortunately, the Sites Project Authority declined the requests.

The Sites Authority has claimed the new reservoir will help fish, but experts have proven it will harm fish. They have also refused to commit to protecting instream flows for fish in the Sacramento River. Despite all these issues the state has authorized almost a billion dollars to the Sites Authority to plan and build the reservoir and the governor is suggested fast tracking permitting the Sites Reservoir plan.

During the Trump administration's visit to California on February 21 he signed paperwork directing the Department of Interior and fisheries agencies to make building new reservoirs easier and he also created a policy to make infrastructure projects exempt from certain environmental laws.

<https://www.change.org/p/no-new-dams-in-california-stop-sites-reservoir>

The Delta Conveyance or Tunnel

The Delta Tunnel project is in scoping, meaning the public is supposed to identify issues for the state to analyze and many of the impacts are not yet known. The Delta Tunnel would be a 6,000 cubic feet-per-second (cfs) diversion from the Bay Delta where much of the water diverted from the Trinity River and the Bay Delta System flow to. The proposed project would include two intakes with a maximum diversion capacity of about 3,000 cfs each. The size of each intake location could range from 75 to 150 acres. This tunnel would be an additional large diversion from the Delta, which means more Trinity and Sacramento River water stored in the reservoirs, including the proposed Sites Reservoir, could be moved to Southern California Water Brokers and large ag. One large water broker has been quoted in saying they do not want the tunnels without the Sites Reservoir.

Currently, the eastern route has been identified as the preferred route for the tunnel. If a tunnel is constructed and operated, water quality and quantity in the Bay-Delta will deteriorate and the ecosystem will collapse. The project would divert up to two-thirds of fresh water flowing into the Delta from the Sacramento River. Some of these freshwater flows come from the Trinity River. Fresh water flows are critical to sustaining the habitat for

critical to sustaining the habitat for hundreds of fish and wildlife species, as well as stopping salt water intrusion from the Bay and flushing out the hundreds of thousands of tons of pollutants and salts that accumulate in the Delta annually. And while the cost of a single tunnel project is unknown, proponents have said it would cost at least \$11 billion. That cost will inevitably fall on ratepayers in Southern California where a key water wholesaler, the Metropolitan Water District, is a proponent of the project.

The tunnel environmental impact report (EIR) should consider the following:

- * The EIR should analyze impacts to California's salmon people, including salmon dependent Tribes and coastal fishing communities,
- * The EIR should analyze alternatives that would increase Delta outflow and reduce exports as compared to current conditions in the Delta. Specifically, the EIR should examine a "no tunnel" alternative.
- * The EIR should analyze the impacts to source waters, and their reservoir storage, including the Trinity, Klamath, Sacramento, Feather, Yuba and San Joaquin Rivers. Water quality impacts from any increased diversions should be included in this analysis.
- * The EIR should analyze the cumulative impacts of the Delta tunnels with the new Trump administration Biological Opinions for the Trump Water Plan, the long term operations of the State Water Project, the Shasta dam raise and the proposed Sites Reservoir. Would these new projects and rules be used to fill the tunnels?
- * The EIR should analyze water conservation, efficiency, and additional demand reduction measures that would be less environmentally harmful and more economical than the tunnel and achieve the same water supply reliability goals and targets.
- * The EIR must analyze the tunnel's consistency with the Delta Reform Act's policy of reduced reliance on the Delta.

The EIR must analyze the tunnel's cumulative impacts, with particular focus on:

- global climate change impacts;
 - water quality, including effects of increases in salinity, toxic hot spots, pesticides, mercury, and other pollutant discharge that won't be cleaned out due to lack of freshwater in the Delta;
 - biological resources, including all species that may be impacted by the SWP, as well as upland habitats that may be affected;
 - impacts on tunnel alignment, since the proposed eastern alignment has potential for significant urban impacts for Delta residents; and
 - Impacts incurred during construction of the tunnel
- * The EIR must adequately analyze the effectiveness of proposed mitigation and conservation measures over the term of the tunnel project, and include mitigations and protections for every impacted watershed.
 - * The EIR should analyze the economic costs and benefits of the single tunnel project, as well as those of a "no tunnel" alternative and investment in water conservation and efficiency improvements to meet water supply needs.

Public comments on the NOP are due on March 20, 2020 by 5 p.m. and may be submitted via email at DeltaConveyanceScoping@water.ca.gov or mail at Delta Conveyance Scoping Comments, Attn: Renee Rodriguez, Department of Water Resources, P.O. Box 942836, Sacramento, CA 94236.

Seven public scoping meetings are scheduled to receive written and verbal comments.

More information on fighting the Delta Tunnel can be obtained at Save California Salmon on Facebook at [californiasalmon.org](https://www.facebook.com/californiasalmon.org) or by emailing regina@californiasalmon.org.

