



DELTA WETLANDS PROJECT

ISOLATED CONVEYANCE FACILITY

The Issue

- The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta “is crucial to the state's overall water picture - it is the heart of California's two largest surface water delivery projects, the State Water Project (SWP) and the federal Central Valley Project (CVP). ... Two-thirds of the state's residents rely on the Delta for at least a portion of their drinking water¹⁴.”
- But, the Delta, and the state’s water supply, are at risk from earthquake, flood and sea level rise. Hurricane Katrina provided dramatic evidence of what can happen when levees fail. Such levee failures have the potential to draw saltwater from the San Francisco Bay into the Delta, degrading Delta water quality and disrupting the state’s water supply.
- This reality has caused some people to reconsider building an isolated conveyance facility (a revised version of the Peripheral Canal) to protect water supplies from Delta disturbances.
- In-Delta Storage is an important addition to the Delta landscape, with or without an isolated conveyance facility, and can provide important benefits whether or not an isolated facility is ever built.

In-Delta Storage Without An Isolated Conveyance Facility

- Construction of In-Delta Storage would strengthen 56 miles of levees and make that part of the Delta more resistant to earthquake, flood and sea level rise.
- In-Delta Storage would improve the reliability and quality of Delta water exports by providing California with a new supply of up to 217,000 acre-feet of fresh water storage.
- In-Delta Storage can improve water quality in the central Delta and lower San Joaquin River, in some months by as much as 29%, by releasing high quality water stored during peak winter flows.
- In-Delta Storage can be operated as a crisis-response tool in the Delta, reducing the impact of levee failures by providing a new source of fresh water between the export pumps and the high salinity water of the western Delta.

In-Delta Storage With an Isolated Conveyance Facility

- In-Delta Storage will ensure the state’s commitment to the Delta ecosystem.
- Even with an Isolated Conveyance Facility, a significant portion of the state’s water supply will come from the Delta. In-Delta Storage will improve the reliability and quality of this water supply.

¹⁴ The Layperson’s Guide to the Delta, Water Education Foundation, 2004

- In-Delta Storage would provide a new source of water to protect central Delta water quality during dry periods when water is being diverted around, rather than through, the Delta.
- Even with an isolated conveyance facility, water exports from the Delta would have to be reduced during emergencies. In-Delta Storage would reduce the frequency and duration of emergencies thereby maintaining water exports.

Delta Wetlands Can Be Built and Can Provide Benefits Soon

- The Delta Wetlands Project is the most thoroughly examined and fully understood of all surface water storage projects under consideration by the State.
- The California Department of Water Resources has found that in-Delta storage is technically feasible, and that “The in-Delta storage Project could provide a variety of benefits and contribute to meeting each of CALFED’s four objectives for water supply reliability, water quality, ecosystem restoration, and levee system integrity.”
- The Delta Wetlands Project has completed most of its key project milestones and permitting requirements and can proceed to construction quickly.
- The Delta Wetlands Project provides offstream water storage – without constructing new dams – and provides important recreation and habitat improvements in the central Delta.