



Delta Conveyance Project Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Delta Conveyance Project needed?

Extreme weather is leading to less snow and more rain in the winter months. California is expected to lose 10% of its water supply by 2040. Without upgrades to the State Water Project's decades-old infrastructure, water supply will continue to decline, risking clean drinking water for 27 million people.

How will the Delta Conveyance Project help?

The Delta Conveyance Project will modernize the water distribution system to capture and move water from big but infrequent storms so we can save more water to use during extended dry periods. If the DCP were operational this year, it could have captured about 909,000 acre-feet of water (from 2/1/24 through 4/11/24). That's 106% of what we have been able to export so far this year, effectively more than doubling water supply while reducing fishery conflicts in the south Delta. As another data point, in the very dry winter of 2021/2022, the project could have captured 236,000 acre-feet of water from a few infrequent but big storms, totaling 45% of all supplies for that water year and significantly offsetting the severe drought conditions.

What's wrong with the existing water infrastructure system?

Our decades-old infrastructure is unable to capture water during big but infrequent storms. It is also vulnerable to earthquakes. Additionally, the one existing State Water Project diversion point in the South Delta is constrained by location, fish and water quality restrictions, and capacity. The Delta Conveyance Project will help prevent catastrophic disruption of water deliveries and offset the amount of water supply California loses as the climate gets hotter and drier.

Aren't there other options? Can't we just do desal, recycling or conservation?

We need to update our current system AND use water more efficiently, recycle it, and, where feasible, create new sources with desalination. But no single approach will protect water supplies and no single approach works in a vacuum. We need to do many things, all at once - including upgrading the infrastructure that delivers a large share of the water supply to a majority of Californians. While local projects can help reduce reliance on moving water across the state, it will still be necessary in the future to capture water along the Sierra Nevada mountains for communities in the Bay Area, Central Valley, Central Coast and Southern California. The Delta Conveyance Project is specifically designed to do that by modernizing the State Water Project. Other approaches are needed but will not protect the longevity and reliability of the State Water Project. We must take a "yes, and" approach to meet all of California's diverse and varied needs consistent with the Governor's Water Supply Strategy and Water Resilience Portfolio.

What about impacts to local Delta communities?

The updated Delta Conveyance Project has been refined, rerouted, and redesigned, based in part on community input, to minimize local impacts. It avoids the central Delta, includes no new forebays and barge landings, reduces pile driving, undergrounds power to avoid hazards to sandhill cranes, and minimizes truck traffic. It also includes a Community Benefits Program to provide the means and resources to implement local projects with tangible and lasting local benefits.



What about the impacts to fish and other biodiversity?

The Delta Conveyance Project reduces fishery conflicts in the south Delta and allows the State of California to both protect fish species and protect water supply reliability. The Delta Conveyance Project would make it possible to move more water during high flow events. This is particularly critical when DWR takes action—as it has done since early February of this year—to improve conditions for fish by reducing pumping in the south Delta. An extensive environmental analysis shows limited effects on native fish species from the project with mitigation. State and federal environmental laws designed to protect fish and wildlife will govern how the new infrastructure is utilized.

Who would pay for the project?

The project would be funded only by the public water agencies that receive water from the State Water Project, not through the state's General Fund and not by state taxpayers.

Is the project worth the cost?

The State Water Project, which serves 27 million people, is one of the most affordable sources of water in California. It is also essential to maintaining water supplies across California communities into the future. The Delta Conveyance Project would help ensure the continued reliability of the State Water Project. A recent economic analysis shows that the State Water Project is highly valuable to the state economy. It also shows that the State Water Project is more affordable than desalination, recycling, stormwater capture and conservation.

Shouldn't you wait until Delta water flow requirements are settled?

The project is designed to meet all permitting conditions and regulatory requirements from several state and federal water agencies. If and when regulations change in the future, DWR will continue to meet any new requirements as a part of project operations. Delaying the project until new regulations are established is not needed, as the project will need to abide those new regulations whenever they get established. Also, delaying the permitting of the project would undermine progress in protecting the vital water supply of the State Water Project.

What have you done to engage Tribes?

DWR initially reached out to more than 120 Tribes and received responses from 13 interested in participating in the consultation process. This included more than 150 government-to-government consultations, numerous site visits, and extensive Tribal review and comment on the consultation record. These efforts played an important role in identifying and evaluating potential impacts on Tribal cultural resources and helped DWR develop robust and responsive mitigation measures.

What have you done to engage Disadvantaged Communities?

DWR has reached out to historically burdened, underrepresented, low income and otherwise vulnerable populations and disadvantaged communities through community meetings, community events, social media and radio advertisements. DWR conducted an extensive survey of residents and workers to understand perspectives about how community members value, experience and depend on the region's cultural, recreational, natural, agricultural, and economic resources in order to identify how the project may impact those resources or potentially bring benefits to Delta communities. DWR also has responsibility to provide affordable, reliable and clean water supplies to the 7 million disadvantaged community members who rely on the State Water Project.

What is the relationship between the Delta Conveyance and Sites projects?

Both projects are critical pieces of the California's overall portfolio to improve statewide water supply resiliency in the face of climate change. The Delta Conveyance Project helps shore up future State Water Project supplies, while the Sites Project would add much-needed water storage, including water stored for environmental purposes. The Delta Conveyance Project could help ensure that water stored at Sites Reservoir can get distributed across the state. Although each project is needed independently, these and all the projects in Governor Newsom's Water Resilience Portfolio and Water Supply Strategy work together to secure water supplies for future decades.

