



Delta Conveyance Project Protecting Delta Farmland

Agriculture is vital to California's economy. The state produces 13% of the nation's total agricultural value. The Delta region is an especially important agricultural area, with over 500,000 acres of productive farmland. It also supports local jobs and businesses.

The Delta Conveyance Project (DCP), which is designed to improve water supply reliability for California's State Water Project, has been carefully planned to minimize its impact on Delta farmland.

Farmland Defined:

Farmland, as described in this document, and defined according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), includes prime farmland, unique farmland, farmland of local importance, or farmland of statewide importance.

Limiting Impacts

From the start, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has prioritized protecting agriculture and reducing harm to farmland in several key ways:

- **Tunnels Instead of Canals:** The project uses underground tunnels, which avoid surface disruptions to farms and irrigation systems.
- **New Route Location:** The tunnel route was moved east, closer to Interstate 5.
- **Smaller Facility Footprint:** The intermediate forebay was eliminated near Twin Cities Road. Facilities were moved away from Clifton Court Forebay, which eliminated the need for a large forebay and reduced the amount of farmland affected.

As a result of these and other design choices, construction and initial environmental mitigation will impact about 3,788 acres of farmland—less than 0.5% of overall Delta farmland. This number assumes permanent impacts to all affected land, including what will be temporarily impacted by construction, or remnant land (less than 20 acres), even though some may be returned to farming after construction.

DWR and the Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA) will continue to work with farmers and landowners to find ways to reduce impacts even further. DWR will confirm the final acreage as further mitigation and project refinements focused on improving constructability and reducing environmental impacts are identified.

Ongoing Commitment to Agriculture

DWR knows that Delta farming is important not just economically, but also to the culture and identity of the region. Delta agriculture generates close to \$1 billion in revenue and supports over 23,000 jobs and \$4.6 billion in economic output.

To protect this way of life, DWR has committed to preserving farmland at a 1-to-1 ratio with lost farmland. This could include working with interested farmers and landowners to buy or preserve their farmland in the Delta, using conservation easements, or contributing to local land trusts.

Community Benefits Program:

As part of its \$200 million Community Benefits Program, DWR is working with local partners on projects that support agriculture, education, job training and more. For example, a proposed partnership with one local organization could help expand their leadership program in Delta communities, which gives high school students from underserved areas hands-on experience in farming and environmental work, including training and paid internships to help them prepare for future careers.



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Planning with Farmers in Mind

DWR worked with local groups to develop the Agricultural Land Stewardship (ALS) Framework, which sets principles for protecting farmland. This framework helped shape the project's design to further limit harm to farmland.

Environmental Mitigation Impacts

Some land is also needed for environmental mitigation to offset the project's broader impacts. These lands may include specific habitat areas that aren't currently being farmed, but some may overlap with agricultural land. As of now, only some of these areas have been identified, and the total number of additional acres is still being determined. Some mitigation will preserve and protect agricultural land for species such as Swainson's Hawk and Tri-colored Blackbird. Mitigation for aquatic resources will likely occur in the Delta Plan's Priority Habitat Areas. As mitigation requirements are determined by regulatory agencies, DWR will use the ALS strategies for minimizing impacts to agricultural land.

DWR will also follow the Delta Stewardship Council's "Good Neighbor Checklist" when developing habitat lands near farms to avoid conflicts.

Land Purchases and Compensation

Any land needed for the project or mitigation will be purchased at fair market value, whether through voluntary agreements or, if necessary, in accordance with state procedures. Property owners will be compensated not only for land but also for any structures on it.

Bottom Line

Some farmland will be used for the Delta Conveyance Project. However, DWR and DCA are taking significant and genuine steps to limit these impacts, involve local farmers in the planning, and compensate fairly for any losses. DWR and the DCA are committed to protecting Delta agriculture while moving forward with this important infrastructure modernization project.

SWP Supports Important Agricultural Land:

The State Water Project is an important water supply source for 750,000 acres of irrigated farmland throughout California. The Delta Conveyance Project would protect this critical water supply and provide significant benefits to agricultural water supply reliability and water quality. The agricultural regions dependent on this water are key contributors to state and local economies and provide locally sourced food to communities throughout California and beyond.

