



Senate Bill 68 – Comprehensive Solution for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

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Chamber Committee

Energy, Water and Environment

Summary

Senate Bill 68 provides a comprehensive solution to the problems facing the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The bill establishes the following: governance structure outline in the form of the Delta Stewardship Council, a plan for Delta restoration, stronger tools to enforce water laws (such as pumping restrictions), and a statewide conservation requirements.

Background

Drought, dwindling fish populations and endangered species regulation have constricted the Delta's water delivery system. SB 68 was originally drafted to target the Delta area to improve both the estuary ecosystem and our water delivery system. However it was broadened to be a comprehensive reform. The bill creates a "Delta Stewardship Council" as an independent state agency responsible for drafting and enforcing a Delta Plan, which must be adopted by January 2012. As part of governance it establishes a Delta Conservancy responsible for ecosystem restoration projects and to balance the co-equal goals of "Delta ecosystem restoration and reliable water supply." The bill also provides protections for the multiple other human uses of the Delta. The bill increases consequences for failing to report water diversion or use and for violating water laws. As a separate measure the SB 68 establishes water use efficiency targets, aiming to reduce per capita water use 20% by the year 2020. Flexibility provisions are included for parts of the state that already have aggressive conservation measures. Finally, the bill seeks to reduce threat of property damage through strategic levee investments, emergency preparedness and appropriate land use measures.

Status

This is a two-year bill. On September 11, 2009 Assembly Committee on Water, Parks and Wildlife recommended to pass the bill as amended. The bill must still pass the Assembly and Senate floor.

Proponents

Audubon California, CA Water Association, Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Defense Fund, Metropolitan Water District of So. Cal., Natural Resource Defense Council, Pacific Coast Fed. Of Fisherman's Association, State Building and Construction Trades Council of California, The Bay Institute, The Nature Conservancy.

Opponents

CA Central Valley Flood Control Ass'n, City of Sacramento, Contra Costa County, Desert Water Agency, East Valley Water District, El Dorado Irrigation System, Newhall County Water District, Regional Council of Rural Counties, Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Sacramento County, Sacramento Reg. County Sanitation Dist., San Joaquin County, Sierra Club CA, Solano County, Valley Ag Water Coalition, Yolo County