



Legislative Conference Committee on Water

Honorable Darrell Steinberg, co-chair
Honorable Sam Aanestad
Honorable Dave Cogdill
Honorable Dean Florez
Honorable Bob Huff
Honorable Alex Padilla
Honorable Fran Pavley

Honorable Karen Bass, co-chair
Honorable Anna Caballero
Honorable Jean Fuller
Honorable Jared Huffman
Honorable Kevin Jeffries
Honorable Jim Nielsen
Honorable Jose Solorio

September 2, 2009

Dear Chairs and Committee Members,

On behalf of our hundreds of thousands of members and supporters and in recognition of the Delta as a habitat of worldwide significance our organizations have a vested stake in the outcome of the Delta discussions. We appreciate the work of the Legislature thus far in the process of developing a comprehensive policy approach to address the many issues faced by this remarkable and challenged California resource.

We believe that the package of Delta bills provides a workable approach, and we encourage resolution of these important policies this year. The importance of the Delta region for migratory birds cannot be overstated, and a critical piece that is missing from this legislation is a policy principle of *no net loss* of habitat for migratory birds in the Delta region.

Specifically, we would like to see the following underlined language included in AB 39 (Huffman):

Section 85302

(d)(1) The Delta Plan shall include the following strategies for restoring a healthy ecosystem.

(A) Restore large areas of interconnected habitats within the Delta and its watershed by 2100.

(B) Establish migratory corridors for fish, birds, and other animals along selected Delta river channels.

(C) Promote viable, diverse pops of native and valued species by reducing the risk of fish kills and the harm from invasive species.

(D) Restore Delta flows and channels to support a healthy estuary and other ecosystems.

(E) Improve water quality to meet drinking water, agriculture, and ecosystem long-term goals.

(F) Restore habitat and ecosystem functions necessary to achieve at least a zero net loss of migratory bird habitat.

Section 85320(i)

New (1) [analyze] The potential impacts resulting from the implementation of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan on habitats and ecological functions necessary to sustain populations of migratory birds.

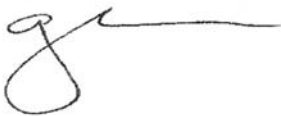
We would also like to see the goals of the Central Valley Joint Venture 2006 Implementation Plan reflected in the Delta legislation with the following underlined insertion in SB 458 (Wolk) as follows:

Section 32376.

Within two years of hiring an executive officer, the board shall prepare and adopt a strategic plan to achieve the goals of the conservancy. The plan shall describe its interaction with local, regional, state, and federal land use, recreation, water and flood management, and habitat conservation and protection efforts within and adjacent to the Delta. The strategic plan shall establish priorities and criteria for projects and programs, based upon an assessment of program requirements, institutional capabilities, and funding needs throughout the Delta. The strategic plan shall be consistent with the Delta Plan, the Delta Protection Commission's resources management plan, the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act of 1977 (Division...), the applicable elements of the Central Valley Joint Venture 2006 Implementation Plan, and the Habitat Management, Preservation and Restoration Plan for the Suisun Marsh.

On behalf of the resources we are committed to protect and our many members statewide we sincerely thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Graham Chisholm
Executive Director
Audubon California



Catherine Hickey for Ellie Cohen
President and CEO
PRBO Conservation Science



Chris Unkel
Director of Public Policy, Western Region
Ducks Unlimited



Leo Winternitz
Delta Project Director
The Nature Conservancy



Greg Yarris
Director of Conservation Policy
California Waterfowl Association