

June 4, 2025

The Honorable James Ramos
Chair, Native American Caucus
1021 O Street, Suite 8310
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Delta Conveyance Project Streamlining Proposal

Dear Chair Ramos:

On behalf of the State Water Contractors (SWC) currently participating in the Delta Conveyance Project planning process¹, I write in response to concerns raised as you consider support for the Delta Conveyance Project streamlining proposal.

The State Water Contractors is a non-profit association of 27 public water agencies across Northern, Central, and Southern California that purchase water from the State Water Project. Collectively, we help deliver clean, reliable water to over 27 million Californians and more than 750,000 acres of farmland. Yet, the State Water Project is facing increasing threats to its reliability from climate change, sea level rise, and other mounting challenges. The Delta Conveyance Project offers a critical opportunity to modernize California's water infrastructure and safeguard access to affordable water for families, farms, and communities throughout the state.

We also recognize and deeply respect the essential role of tribal nations in California's past, present, and future. Many of our member agencies serve tribal communities directly, and we are fully committed to protecting tribal water uses, cultural resources, and knowledge. We understand there are concerns regarding how the Delta Conveyance Project streamlining proposal could affect these values, and we want to affirm our understanding of these issues and our shared commitment to meaningful engagement and protection.



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¹ Alameda County Flood Control District Zone 7, Alameda County Water District, Antelope Valley – East Kern Water Agency, Casitas Municipal Water District, Coachella Valley Water District, Crestline – Lake Arrowhead Water Agency, Desert Water Agency, Dudley Ridge Water District, Kern County Water Agency, Littlerock Creek Irrigation District, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Mojave Water Agency, Palmdale Water District, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, San Geronimo Pass Water Agency, San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency.

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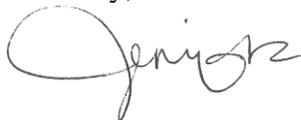
In 2017, the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) formally recognized three tribal beneficial uses of water and directed each regional board to incorporate these into their local water quality plans. The current update to the Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan (Bay-Delta Plan) is expected to be adopted by next year and includes the designation of tribal beneficial uses of water. The Delta Conveyance Project has not been approved, but it will be subject to the Bay-Delta Plan, as a component of the State Water Project, in the future. Even before adoption of the Bay-Delta Plan, tribal beneficial use is being considered as part of the Water Board's decision related to the Department of Water Resources' water right change petition for the Delta Conveyance Project.

Importantly, the Delta Conveyance Project streamlining proposal does **not** intersect with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption proposal related to water quality control plans. The Delta Conveyance Project has already undergone a full CEQA review, with extensive mitigation measures identified and adopted to safeguard tribal cultural resources, including artifacts and ancestral remains, during construction. Tribal engagement has been foundational to the design, environmental review and planning process and will remain central throughout implementation. Under the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) Tribal Engagement Policy, CEQA's AB 52 and other tribal consultation policies, DWR proactively reached out to 121 tribal organizations, held over 150 meetings, and hosted site visits and tribal tours. These efforts from 2019 to the present have informed project design, environmental review and led to the adoption of culturally responsive mitigation. These include ensuring tribal monitors are present during construction, ongoing tribal consultation to guide avoidance and mitigation efforts, and compliance with all legal and tribal requirements for confidentiality and culturally respectful treatment of sites and ancestral remains.

We view California's tribal governments as essential partners in responsible water management and commend DWR's dedication to engagement and responsiveness. We fully support the integration of tribal beneficial uses into the Bay-Delta Plan and value the inclusive and consultative approach taken regarding the Delta Conveyance Project. These efforts affirm tribal rights, confidentiality, knowledge and sovereignty, and we remain committed to deepening collaboration moving forward.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge your support for the Delta Conveyance Project streamlining proposal and thank you for your consideration of this letter. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me directly at jpierre@swc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Pierre". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jennifer Pierre
General Manager