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Zone 7 Board Continues Investments in Water Reliability for the Tri-Valley, Votes to Participate in the Environmental Planning Stage of Delta Conveyance Project

Livermore, CA (November 20, 2020) — In a 5-2 decision, the Zone 7 Board of Directors voted to continue participation for the next two years in the environmental planning phase of [Delta Conveyance Project](#). Approval of this phase allows the Agency to remain a part of the process and provide input but does not require the Agency to commit to the final project. The Agency has been participating throughout the various efforts to address Delta conveyance, which have evolved considerably over the last decade. The move supports the Agency's mission to deliver safe, reliable, efficient and sustainable water to the residents of the Tri-Valley. In addition to the primary benefit of increased reliability through alternative Delta conveyance, the Project would also provide benefits in water supply and water quality.

The Tri-Valley area that is served by Zone 7 receives approximately 70% of its water through the Delta as a State Water Project contractor. State Water Project water, carryover water, water banked in Kern County and transfer water all come through the Delta, making the dependability of the Delta infrastructure of critical importance to water supply reliability for the Tri-Valley community.

Delta conveyance is the movement of water through the network of waterways in the [Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta](#), the hub of the [State Water Project](#) – California's most critical water delivery infrastructure. Two-thirds of California's water begins its journey as snowmelt from high in the Sierra Nevada, eventually flowing into the Delta where the State Water Project infrastructure conveys the water to 27 million Californians and 750,000 acres of farmland from the Tri-Valley down to San Diego.

The State Water Project's 1960-era infrastructure is aging and needs to be upgraded to meet the challenges ahead. As we've seen in recent years, the state's precipitation is increasingly coming in the form of big storms between extended dry periods. The State Water Project infrastructure can be improved to be more resilient to climate change and more flexible in its ability to take advantage of big storms by moving water when it's available without harming threatened and endangered species.

Delta conveyance is also threatened by various factors such as ecosystem considerations, seismic risk and sea level rise. The Delta Conveyance Project would add new conveyance facilities in the Delta, including two new intakes located farther north, away from sensitive fish habitat and 20 feet above sea level. The proposed Project will likely increase SWP reliability and improve water quality, but a more reliable alternate conveyance system for the majority of Zone 7's water is the most significant benefit.

The Board's decision affirmed continued participation in the environmental planning phase of the Project and would allow Zone 7 to elect to continue to participate in the Project in the future. This also gives the Agency influence throughout this stage of the process, which is expected to take four years. Rather than opting to participate in the full four-year commitment, the Board elected to participate for the next two years, of which the Agency's share of the funding cost is approximately \$2,800,000, providing the Agency with an offramp to exit the project, if needed, at the two-year mark. If the Project remains beneficial to the Tri-Valley, the Agency can continue for the remaining two years of the environmental planning process.

Continued participation in the planning costs does not commit the Agency to participation in the Project itself. At such time when full participation is up for consideration, the community would be engaged, and the decision would come to the Board, with the results of the environmental planning process informing such decision.

The vote also approved an amendment to the Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA) Joint Powers Agreement which creates new DCA Board seats. The new structure would change the number of seats from five to seven and allocate representation by Contractor Class. This benefits the Agency as it falls under Contractor Class 2 and would now provide Zone 7 with shared representation on the Board with the Alameda County Water District. The Agencies are expected to alternate years on the Board.

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About Zone 7 Water

Zone 7 Water Agency is one of the 10 active zones of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. The District was established by the State Legislature in October 1949 to solve problems of flooding, drainage, channel erosion and water supply and conservation in Alameda County. In 1957, by popular vote, Zone 7 became a special district governed by a seven-member board of directors. Along with flood protection, Zone 7 supplies water to all of eastern Alameda County and a population of over a quarter million residents. Treated water is sold wholesale to local retailers, including the cities of Livermore and Pleasanton, the Dublin San Ramon Services District, and the California Water Service Company. Zone 7 also distributes untreated water to local agriculture operations and golf courses.