



 [The Planning and Conservation League](#)

PCL INSIDER: News from the Capitol

THE NEXT DECADE IN THE DELTA: WHAT CAN WE DO NOW?

Next Monday, the California Senate Select Committee on the Delta Stewardship & Sustainability is convening a [special informational hearing](#) called "The Next Decade in the Delta." The hearing will focus on near-term projects in the Delta region that will not impede the implementation of any long-term State planning effort (i.e. the "Delta Plan," the "Bay Delta Conservation Plan" or the "Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan").

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is the focus of several planning and regulatory processes that are often characterized by conflict and tension among agencies and stakeholders. Many have recognized there are good and worthy near-term projects that seem to get lost in the tensions surrounding these processes. This year, a diverse group of stakeholders came together in six meetings over the course of six months. The goal of this group, referred to as the Coalition to Support Delta Projects, was to identify near-term Delta projects that could receive broad support and should move forward through the regulatory and other processes.

The Senate hearing will highlight the unprecedented effort spearheaded by the unexpected mix of bedfellows. The Coalition to Support Delta Projects, initiated by the Planning and Conservation League, Westlands Water District, Central Delta Water Agency, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Delta Counties Coalition, and Contra Costa Water District, will present to the Senate committee on the [success](#) of their six month effort to gain broad support for over 40 projects in the Delta region.

Click [here](#) for more information on attending the hearing meeting, including location and agenda. You can also watch a live webcast of the hearing by streaming it online [here](#).

2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION WRAP-UP: SMALL VICTORIES FOR THE ENVIRONMENT IN AN OVERALL LACK-LUSTER YEAR

As we reported in the [August 31 Insider](#), the 2012 Legislative Session wrapped up with a few key defensive victories for the environmental community, several important bills moving forward to the Governor's desk, and a lot of disappointment for the environmental policies that were not addressed or did not succeed.

Governor Moves Forward on Cap-and-Trade and Water

Among the bills signed into law by Governor Brown were [SB 535](#) (De León) and [SB 1532](#) (J. Pérez); together, these bills provide a framework for allocating the revenue from the AB 32 Cap-and-Trade Auctions, and mandate that 25% of this money must benefit underserved communities that suffer the most from pollution with 10% of that money being spent directly in those communities. While these laws will be critical as California moves to implement AB 32, they

provide, more of a general framework for allocations rather than specific mandates, and other bills that were more specific in their allocation formulas (such as SB 1575) did not make it to the Governor's desk. Therefore, a lot of work is still needed within the regulatory arena over the coming months to ensure these hundreds of millions of dollars in funding will be used as effectively as possible to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

A number of important water bills were also signed into law. Governor Brown signed [AB 685](#) (Eng), enshrining access to safe and clean water as a [basic human right](#) for Californians. AB 685 requires State agencies to take this policy into account when making all relevant decisions. Governor Brown also signed [AB 1750](#) (Solorio), authorizing landscape contractors to install rainwater catchment systems and allowing rooftop rainwater capture without a water permit. [AB 2230](#) (Gatto), also signed into law, will mandate that all new car washes recycle and reuse at least 60% of their wash and rinse water.

A host of laws related to the Delta and flood control, all authored by Senator Wolk, were also signed into law by Governor Brown. These include [SB 200](#), which involves the extension of a cost share program for the Central Valley Flood Protection Board for Delta levee maintenance; [SB 1278](#), requiring cities and counties within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley to amend their general plans by July 2, 2015; and [SB 1495](#), which exempts certain maintenance and specified leases from requiring a certification of compliance from the Delta Stewardship Council.

Assault on CEQA Slows to a Trickle (For Now)

Although the environmental community was successful in defeating the most drastic of CEQA-undermining bills, a number of small CEQA cuts did pass into law. Among the bills signed by the Governor were [AB 890](#) (Olsen), allowing an exemption for minor roadway improvements or repair that are in the interest of public safety. While PCL opposed this bill, we were able to work with the author and other stakeholders so that the final language was narrowly tailored for urgent public safety measures to minimize the impacts to CEQA.

Mixed Bag for Plastics and Waste

[SB 568](#) (Lowenthal), banning polystyrene take-out containers, lacked sufficient votes to make it out of the Assembly even after a final coordinated push by environmental groups including PCL. A bill that would ban single-use plastic bags, [AB 298](#) (Brownley), never made it out of committee. Since these initiatives have been top priorities for many environmental groups, PCL expects similar attempts to resurface during the next session.

[AB 837](#) (Nestande), signed into law, requires manufacturers of plastic packaging containers to maintain and provide documentation on any environmental marketing claim.

Governor Brown, unfortunately, signed [AB 845](#) (Ma), which prevents local governments from restricting importation of solid waste into their districts. This measure, which PCL and many environmental groups opposed, overturns a longstanding voter initiative in Solano County that limited imported solid waste.

The Legislature reconvenes for the 2013-2014 Legislative Session on December 3, 2012 for an Organization Session at Noon.

BALLOTS ARE OUT: PCL'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A GREEN VOTE

Now that the Legislative Session has ended, the power returns more directly to the people to decide new laws through ballot initiatives. With absentee ballots hitting mail boxes all across the State, it's officially game-on for many critical measures. Here is PCL's position on some major

statewide initiatives that affect California's environment and our access to critical information.

PCL Supports

[Proposition 37](#), California Right to Know, would require foods containing genetically modified organism (GMOs) to reflect this information on the labeling.

[Proposition 39](#), the California Clean Energy Jobs Act, would close the loophole allowing out-of-state corporations to get a tax break in California and use this revenue for creation of [clean energy sector jobs](#) and for California public schools.