PCL INSIDER: News from the Capitol

Happy Holidays!

As 2013 comes to a close, we hope all of you and your families have a wonderful holiday season, and a happy and healthy new year! This has been a remarkable year for PCL, as we: helped convene a consensus-based effort to identify dozens of near-term projects that will help protect and restore the Delta, many of which are already moving forward; sponsored the most important coastal protection bill in the past two decades, which we hope to see pass in 2014; saw ground finally broken on the removal of the San Clemente Dam along the Carmel River; played a crucial role in staving off clandestine attacks on the California Public Records Act; and established and led the 200+ member CEQA Works coalition and fended off efforts to gut California’s most important environmental and community protection law.

Of course, our work is not done, and 2014 should be another busy and productive year as we: promote a smaller and greener water bond that prioritizes regional water self-sufficiency and a ‘reduce, reuse, recycle and restore’ approach; challenge the massive ‘twin tunnels’ that maintain our overreliance on environmentally devastating water transfers rather than taking a more holistic approach to water; continue leading the CEQA Works coalition and fight to ensure that California’s environmental ‘bill of rights’ stays strong and vibrant; and revitalize our organizational (League) membership so we can be an even stronger voice for our environment in the coming years.

We hope you will consider supporting PCL and the PCL Foundation this Holiday Season by clicking here.

Flawed Twin Tunnel Documents Released

After seven years, $240 million, and numerous delays, the State has finally released an expensive paperweight: 34,000 pages of the public draft Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) and associated environmental documents. This draft of the BDCP still stubbornly pushes to build two massive, multi-billion dollar, environmentally destructive tunnels over more sustainable water solutions. Despite their nine-foot thickness when printed, the BDCP documents continue to lack analysis and answers to key questions, including financing and operations of the twin tunnels. The 120-day public comment period began Friday the 13th – an ominous date for the flawed proposal?

In order to press forward with BDCP, the water contractors are being asked to risk another $1.2 billion (yes, billion) of their ratepayers’ money – just in additional planning costs. This expensive gamble moves to a whole new level if the tunnels are built. An independent economist recently released a report detailing the 11 Financial Red Flags of BDCP, which include debt service costs, questions of financial liability, overestimated benefits, and drying up money for local projects.
It’s time to stop squandering money and paper on the tunnels, and start exploring viable alternatives.

Jerry Meral Retires (again)

Governor Brown’s top water official – and longtime PCL Executive Director – Jerry Meral will retire at the end of the month. Meral, who was brought out of retirement by Governor Brown to serve as Deputy Secretary of the state’s Natural Resources Agency, has been the Administration’s point-person on the BDCP. He notified Brown of his plan to retire last Monday, the day the BDCP EIR/EIS was released, noting in his letter to the Governor that “it is virtually certain that the [BDCP] plan will be implemented.”

While PCL has not always seen eye-to-eye with Deputy Secretary Meral on the proposed twin tunnels, we applaud the incredible role he has played throughout his public and nonprofit career in preserving California’s waterways, and in building and leading PCL for nearly two decades. We wish him the best in his retirement.

Register NOW for 2014 Environmental Symposium

February 1 Event at UC Davis to Focus on CA Water Policy

Register now for the Planning and Conservation League and PCL Foundation’s annual Environmental Symposium, Water for Life: Towards an Equitable and Sustainable Water Future for California. With 2014 shaping up as the ‘year of water’ in California, we are focusing our Symposium on bringing together California’s environmental, community, business, agency and elected leaders to explore the future of the BDCP, 2014 Water Bond, coastal protection efforts, and a host of other key topics related to California water policy. Attendance is limited to 200 guests, so register now! Learn more about sponsorship opportunities here.

DETAILS

WHEN: Saturday, February 1st, 2014, 9:00am-5:30pm

WHERE: UC Davis School of Law, King Hall

FOR MORE INFO/TO RSVP: Click here or contact Beverley Newman at bnewman@pcl.org or 916-822-5636

PCL Seeks Legislative Advocate

We are looking to hire an energetic, self-motivated individual with environmental policy experience to direct the Planning and Conservation League’s legislative program! The Legislative Advocate will oversee PCL’s legislative agenda, track all PCL priority bills and develop new legislation, and act as the primary spokesperson for PCL in the State Capitol. For a more detailed job description, please click here. Resumes should be submitted to resumes@pcl.org by Friday, January 10.

Apply Now for Winter/Spring Internships

PCL is seeking two interns for Winter/Spring semester to assist with our water and CEQA efforts. We are looking for a Water Policy Intern to provide legislative and policy support on a variety of statewide issues, including coastal protection, stormwater capture and reuse, Bay-Delta planning efforts, and more. We are also recruiting an intern to assist us organizing CEQA Community
Workshops throughout California, and assist with other CEQA efforts. Both internships are unpaid, and require 8-16 hours per week commitment. Students or recent graduates with background in environmental policy encouraged to apply. For full descriptions and application information, please click here.

Supporters Join PCL at Los Angeles and Sacramento Events

PCL Honors John Van de Kamp, Community and Environmental Justice Advocates

PCL has been organizing intimate events throughout California In order to better connect with our many supporters throughout the state, recognize the work of local environmental advocates, and engage key legislators in their districts.

On October 23, more than 75 supporters joined PCL and special guest Assemblymember Mariko Yamada at Time Tested Books in Midtown Sacramento as we honored the critically important work being done by the environmental health and justice communities, including the Community Water Center, Safe Water Alliance and the SB 535 Coalition. Click here to read more about the event.

Assemblymember Mariko Yamada speaking at the Sacramento event.

Then, on November 14, more than 125 guests joined the PCL family at the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens as we celebrated Former Attorney General John Van de Kamp and thanked him for his tireless efforts on behalf of California's environment and for his years of service on the PCL Board of Directors. Event co-Chairs Senator Kevin de León and Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer also joined us as we presented the LA Conservation Corps with the first ever John Van de Kamp Youth and the Environment Award. Click here for a recap of the evening.
Former California Attorney General John Van de Kamp at the LA reception

Thanks to the generous support of our event sponsors and attendees, we raised nearly $75,000 at these two events that will support PCL and PCL Foundation’s efforts to safeguard California’s lands, air, waters and communities. Look for an event near you in 2014!

Please add pclmail@pcl.org to your address book to ensure delivery to your inbox.

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