



## PCL INSIDER: News from the Capitol

### Governor and Legislature Show Support for Coastal Protection

It's been a good week for the California Coastal Commission. As the chronically underfunded state agency tasked with protecting California's beautiful coastline, the Commission received a much-needed boost on June 27<sup>th</sup> when Governor Brown signed the state budget. The \$96.3 billion general fund includes a section to augment the Commission's budget by \$4 million, providing them with additional staff resources and more funding for local assistance planning grants.

The Coastal Commission also continues to find support in the Legislature. PCL-sponsored [AB 976](#) (Atkins) passed out of the Senate Natural Resources Committee on June 25<sup>th</sup>—its first hearing since passing the Assembly Floor on May 30<sup>th</sup>. This bill would give the Coastal Commission administrative penalty authority, providing a much-needed tool to help deter Coastal Act violations like [blocked public beach access](#), damage to sensitive environments, and blatantly illegal construction in threatened steelhead habitat à la billionaire [Sean Parker's wedding](#). AB 976 will next be heard in Senate Judiciary on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Contact [Rebecca Crebbin-Coates](#) to add your organization to our support letters for AB 976.

### BDCP Tunnels Face Increased Opposition

The Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) has admirably lofty ambitions to protect and restore the health of the failing Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and to provide better water supply reliability to California. The question becomes: will the proposed mechanism to achieve this hurt more than it helps? Many citizens, environmental organizations, and even [members of Congress](#) think it will – and their concerns have not yet been adequately addressed by the Brown administration.

The preferred project analyzed in BDCP consists of two 35-mile-long tunnels, each tall enough to fit a 4-story building, and would generate enough 'tunnel muck' from the boring process to fill the Staples Center in Los Angeles about five times over. These tunnels would have the combined capacity to transport 9,000 cfs of water from the Sacramento River, under the Delta, and to existing aqueducts near Tracy. The project also includes 100,000 acres of habitat restoration.

Concerns with BDCP are varied, ranging from skepticism that the project will be able to adequately protect imperiled fish populations, to the absence of assurances that the tunnels won't be used to full capacity, to the lack of a detailed financing plan. BDCP is officially estimated to cost \$24.7 billion over 50 years, but may easily run higher than \$50 or \$60 billion after factoring in debt service and the cost overruns common to large infrastructure projects. State and federal taxpayers would have to pay [nearly a third](#) of the official cost of the plan, with no word yet on who will pay for overruns or how much of the water exporters' cost will be passed on to urban ratepayers.

Many alternatives to the twin tunnels have been proposed, including the PCL-supported [Portfolio Alternative](#), but have not yet been sufficiently analyzed under BDCP – despite the urging of [State legislators](#) and others. Members of Congress from Northern California continue to vocally oppose the project. The next BDCP public meeting will be held on July 17<sup>th</sup> in Sacramento, and will review chapters 8-12 of the Administrative Draft. Water exporters are pushing the state and federal government to release the completed draft BDCP and accompanying EIR/EIS on October 1<sup>st</sup>, despite independent scientific concerns about the approach.

## **Delta Plan Lawsuits: Another Piece of the Delta Policy Puzzle**

Mid-June saw a [flurry of lawsuits](#) against the Delta Stewardship Council's newly released Delta Plan, the long-term vision for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta mandated by the Legislature in 2009. The Delta Plan is required to address ["coequal goals"](#) of water supply reliability and ecosystem health, and the seven lawsuits filed thus far claim that it has failed to do so. Which one of the coequal goals is at issue depends on who you ask. The plaintiffs range from San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority/Westlands Water District to a group of environmental organizations (California Water Impact Network, Friends of the River, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, AquAlliance, Restore the Delta, and Center for Biological Diversity) and [others](#). Stay tuned as these lawsuits progress. The outcome of decisions related to the Delta Plan will have broad impacts on the fate of the Delta and its water, and may set the stage for whether BDCP is approved.

## **Still Quiet on the CEQA Front (at the Moment)**

President Pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg's omnibus CEQA bill, [SB 731](#), is expected to pass out of the Assembly Natural Resources committee today without any substantial amendments. PCL is closely watching this bill, which includes among its many provisions: a requirement that lead agencies submit annual compliance reports with mitigation monitoring plans, creation of statewide thresholds for certain impacts, elimination of aesthetics as a significant impact in priority development areas, and concurrent record preparation. With July being a slow time in the Legislature due to summer recess, Senator Steinberg is taking this opportunity to reach out to key stakeholders – including environmental advocates, labor representatives and business leaders, among others – to refine

SB 731 moving forward. The legislation may be amended accordingly when it comes up for its last round of policy hearings in August, and PCL will continue to keep you updated on developments as they arise.

Most of the other positive CEQA legislation PCL has been working on are now two-year bills that will be taken back up in January. For more information on all pending CEQA legislation, please see PCL's [list of CEQA bills](#).

## **PCL and Many Others Celebrate San Clemente Dam Groundbreaking**

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, PCL hosted a community celebration of the San Clemente Dam Removal and Carmel River Reroute prior to the official ceremonial groundbreaking the next day. Nearly 60 environmental activists, elected and agency officials, business leaders, and concerned residents came together to celebrate the largest dam removal in California history! It was a special honor to recognize the vision and hard work of the [Carmel River Watershed Conservancy](#), which was instrumental in conceptualizing and moving this project forward when many thought a dam removal of this scale was not possible. Equally inspiring was realizing how many people from all walks of life had to come together over the past decade (and more!) to make this project – which will bring tremendous economic, public safety as well as environmental benefits to the region—a reality.

As the saying goes, 'success has many parents', and we at the PCL Foundation are proud to be counted among them. Through the hard work of Dr. Monica Hunter, Gabriela Alberola, and Jonas Minton in the community and in Sacramento, we were able to help build broad support for the project, usher it through the rigorous permitting process, and ensure the project's economic viability. It was heartening to hear PCL Foundation's efforts recognized at the ceremonial groundbreaking the day after our celebration. Whether it was Senator Bill Monning – who authored legislation to fund the dam removal – relaying the story of his first exposure to the dam on a tour organized by Dr. Hunter, or Jonas Minton receiving recognition for his efforts in the form of a piece of the San Clemente Dam, it was wonderful to see the important role PCLF has played in furthering this historic project.

***"The PCL Foundation played a vital role in bringing together all the stakeholders around removing the San Clemente Dam. It is hard to see how this project would have happened without them."*** Sam Schuchat, Executive Officer, CA State Coastal Conservancy



*Lorin Letendre of the Carmel River Watershed Conservancy Makes Remarks*



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