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PLANNING AND CONSERVATION LEAGUE

PCL INSIDER: News from the Capitol

Major Loophole Still Sought in Water Bond

With two days left before summer recess, the Legislature continues to fight over what kind of revised water bond could gain a two-thirds vote in the Assembly and Senate, as well as the approval of voters on the November ballot. One major issue has been the demand by special interests that water purchases be subsidized by the state's taxpayers. Although this is described as being for the environment, it contains a major loophole that would allow the water purchased with public funds to subsequently be pumped from the Delta, further contributing to the decline of the ecosystem. This loophole would allow environmentally-disastrous 'gaming' of the system, similar to the misnamed Environmental Water Account several years ago.

Another critical flaw is the funding criteria for storage projects, which gives an overwhelming advantage to three large dam projects in the Central Valley. The criteria – including extra points for recreational benefits (e.g. water skiing) – knock out of contention worthwhile groundwater projects, seismic restoration of existing reservoirs, and other cost-effective and environmentally sustainable storage projects that could meet the needs of millions in Southern California, the Bay Area, the Central Valley, and the North and Central Coast regions.

We urge the Legislative leadership to reject all special interest, environmentally-damaging provisions in any new bond.

Speaker's Budget Trailer Bill a Win for Coastal Access

The Coastal Commission is now better equipped to protect public access to California's coast, thanks to the passage of a budget trailer bill that goes into effect today. Last year, PCL sponsored AB 976 (Atkins), an important coastal protection bill that would have given the Coastal Commission the ability to fine violators of the Coastal Act for actions such as environmental damage and blocking public access to the beach. AB 976 barely failed a final concurrence vote – but Speaker Atkins made sure that wasn't the end of the story by helping to enact the bill's coastal access objectives through a budget trailer bill provision this year. PCL commends Speaker Atkins for her work to get this significant provision across the finish line.

Southern California Stormwater Meeting Videos Available Online

On June 13th, PCL partnered with several agencies, non-profits, and California water experts

to discuss overcoming challenges to stormwater capture in Southern California. We were joined by **Congresswoman Grace Napolitano**, **Fran Spivy-Weber** of the State Water Resources Control Board, **Noah Garrison** of NRDC, **John Kemmerer** of U.S. EPA Region 9, and other stormwater leaders as we discussed regulatory and permitting issues, practical obstacles, successful approaches, and funding strategies. You can now view the panel discussions online on the website of the Southern California Association of Governments by clicking here.

Join Us at Our San Diego CEQA Community Workshop

There is still time to register for PCL's next **CEQA Community Workshop**, which will take place on **Saturday, July 19, 2014**, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Normal Heights Community Center in San Diego. Registration is $25.00, including lunch. Join us to learn how to use CEQA more effectively and to mobilize around this essential law. For more information or to register, please click here.