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Calling the most recent Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) delay the “last, best opportunity to stand up to ... unreasonable demands,” representatives Jerry McNerney, George Miller, Mike Thompson, Doris Matsui and John Garamendi called for specific steps to be taken for the BDCP to move forward in a fair and transparent manner.

The five members from the California congressional delegation have been vocal in calling for changes to the BDCP and have demanded that any plan have significant input from the Bay-Delta region.

In letters sent to Gov. Jerry Brown and Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, the lawmakers wrote, “We recognize that some are now calling for an immediate decision, but we believe that it is critical to get this right; a rushed and inadequate Bay-Delta planning effort will lead to increased litigation, uncertainty, and expense.”

Wrote McNerney, “I will not accept any plan for the Delta that is harmful to the farmers, families and small business owners in the Delta region. To date, the planning process for Delta water has been unduly influenced by wealthy water contractors from south of the Delta who would steal our water, costing us millions of dollars and countless jobs. This delay provides an opportunity for the state and federal governments to stand up to the water contractors and ensure that the BDCP includes the input of our region. I will continue to fight against any measures that would destroy the Delta and our way of life.”

According to Miller, “More than five years into this process, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan still hasn’t met basic legal or scientific requirements. This is the last chance to fix it, and that’s why this delay is so important: it gives the scientists time to get it right. The Bay-Delta’s health is key to California’s future – we can either work out a good plan that reduces reliance on the Delta, or we can end up with increased litigation, uncertainty, and expense.”

In the words of Thompson, “So far in this process we’ve seen too many back-door deals that put the interests of South-of-Delta water contractors before our farmers, fishermen and local communities. Many of our families and small businesses that depend on the Delta would have their livelihood stripped away and the Delta’s diverse wildlife would be destroyed if these politically driven deals were put in place. Federal and state officials need to use this delay to come up with fair and transparent plan that is based on sound science so that our communities, businesses, fish, wildlife and environment in the Delta and north of the Delta are not harmed.”

Wrote Matsui, “A 50-year permit needs to be done not only right, but with due diligence and equitable treatment to all those affected. I want to see the federal and state agencies take this opportunity to put forward a process and a plan for the Delta region that recognizes the input they’ve received not just from south of Delta interests, but north of Delta interests as well. Our state can’t afford to get this wrong.”

According to Garamendi, “As the lynchpin of California’s water system, the economic and environmental sustainability of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta must be made front and center in this discussion. It’s the law. In addition, using the best available science, we must focus on conservation, storage, and recycling to preserve our state’s ecosystems and to meet the water needs of nearly 40 million Californians.”