

September 13, 2011

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Jerry McNerney today spearheaded efforts to fight against the peripheral canal and stand up for residents of the San Joaquin Delta. McNerney wrote to Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to demand that steps be taken to ensure the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) serves the best interests of Delta residents.

McNerney is leading the fight against a new conveyance system, such as a peripheral canal or tunnel, proposed by the BDCP that would take large amounts of water from the Delta. The letter he sent underscores the harm that a canal or tunnel would bring to our local economy in the Delta and insists that any final BDCP benefit the Delta region.

Since 2007, McNerney has worked closely with local officials to ensure that our area's voice is heard as key decisions are made about the San Joaquin Delta. Today's letter was sent as follow-up to a request that McNerney received from Contra Costa, San Joaquin, Sacramento, and Solano Counties to help local officials make their concerns heard by the Interior Department. Representatives Doris Matsui and Mike Thompson joined McNerney in sending the letter.

Text of the letter follows:

September 13, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

We are writing to reemphasize our strong opposition to many proposed components of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) and to bring your attention to serious concerns about the BDCP expressed by many elected officials from the Delta region. We urge you to take clear, concrete steps to ensure that the BDCP is based on sound science and that any final solutions serve the best interests of Delta communities.

As we're sure you are aware, the Counties of Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Solano have contacted senior policymakers to express their concern that the recently-announced, aggressive timetable for the BDCP will benefit south-of-Delta water users at the expense of Delta communities. We concur with this assessment and believe it is essential that you carefully consider the best interests of Delta residents as you move forward.

The most recent draft of the Economic Sustainability Plan under development by the Delta Protection Commission underscores the harm that many of the BDCP's proposals will bring to Delta communities. Agriculture is the economic lifeblood of the Delta region, and a peripheral canal or tunnel that ships large amounts of water around the Delta would be a devastating blow to the local economy.

For instance, the draft plan estimates that a 15,000 cfs tunnel would diminish water quality, leading to agricultural losses of \$20 - \$65 million annually, with the possibility of as much as \$200 million in agricultural losses. The footprint from an isolated conveyance facility would cost as much as \$15 million annually, and agricultural losses associated with various other aspects of the BDCP would cost tens of millions more. The draft plan also demonstrates that the proposed conveyance system would harm the Delta's tourism economy and local drinking water supplies.

It is unacceptable for the federal government to knowingly advance a plan that will cause so much harm to an entire region without considering better alternatives. Instead of rushing forward with a deeply flawed BDCP, state and federal officials should evaluate the recommendations that have been offered by Delta communities and the ongoing work of the Delta Stewardship Council, Delta Conservancy, and Delta Protection Commission.

Improving Delta levees, enhancing regional involvement in Delta decision making, streamlining local, state, and federal regulatory processes, and improving freshwater flows through the Delta

are just a few of the suggestions that have been offered and enjoy widespread support in the region. According to the draft Economic Sustainability Plan, an investment of \$1 billion to \$2 billion in local levees – a large sum, but far less than the cost of a new conveyance system – would benefit the local economy and reduce earthquake risks. These proposals deserve your full consideration, and as appropriate, good scientific analysis.

Pledges that the BDCP will be a more open, transparent, and inclusive process are welcome, but state and federal policymakers have not yet proven that the BDCP is being fixed. Any final BDCP will only enjoy legitimacy if it is based on sound science, is crafted in a transparent fashion, and benefits every region of California.

We look forward to hearing back from you with information on several matters listed below:

- 1) What steps will you take to ensure that the concerns and suggestions raised by local governments from the Delta receive full and fair consideration?
- 2) What steps will you take to ensure that the Department of the Interior and its partner agencies fulfill their promise to make the BDCP a more open and transparent process?
- 3) What steps will you take to ensure that the final BDCP is based on sound science and engineering?
- 4) What steps will you take to ensure that the BDCP is acceptable to residents of the Delta region?
- 5) What steps will you take to assure Northern California that it will remain whole if the BDCP is implemented on issues such as flood protection and water rights?

In addition, we request a meeting with you and local officials during your next trip to Northern California. Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,

Jerry McNerney

Doris Matsui

Mike Thompson

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

CC: David Hayes, Deputy Secretary of the Interior
John Laird, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency
Gerald Meral, Deputy Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors
Solano County Board of Supervisors
Yolo County Board of Supervisors