

# DUDLEY RIDGE WATER DISTRICT

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Mr. Lester Snow  
Director  
Department of Water Resources  
P.O. Box 942836  
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

RE: South Delta Improvements Program

Dear Director Snow,

On behalf of Dudley Ridge Water District (DRWD), I am writing today to express our district's support for the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) South Delta Improvements Program (SDIP), a critical water supply, water quality and environmental project designed to meet California's diverse water needs. This October, DWR and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation released a draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement (EIR/S) for SDIP, kicking off an important public review and comment process.

DRWD is an agricultural water district, solely dependent on the State Water Project (SWP) for its surface water supply. We do not have a useable groundwater supply, so increased reliability of SWP water is critical to our district's survival.

As you know, California is facing a critical challenge: We need a safe and reliable water supply to keep up with our rapidly rising population and fast-growing trillion-dollar economy. However, we have limited water supplies in our arid state, so we must better utilize our existing water resources and infrastructure... otherwise, we put our communities, farms, environment and businesses at great risk. As you know two-thirds of California receives its water from the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Given its importance, we need better ways to manage the Delta's water delivery system, as well as the water itself. In essence, we need to make every drop count.

In 2000, the state and federal governments initiated the historic CalFed Bay-Delta Program to manage the Bay-Delta's water resources and eco-system. A unique collaboration of interests supported the plan including environmental organizations, water agencies, business interests, farmers, and state and federal water and fish agencies. SDIP is the next step forward in this long-term planning effort for the Bay-Delta.

SDIP is a responsible and balanced plan to better utilize and integrate our existing water management infrastructure in the Delta. Collectively, it will improve our state's water supply reliability, water quality and the overall health of the Bay-Delta ecosystem. The program will construct seasonal tidal gates to protect fish, and improve water circulation and quality in the Delta, dredge select Delta channels to improve water deliveries for local farmers, and allow SWP deliveries to increase modestly when it is environmentally safe to do so.

Currently, the state is constrained in its ability to use water supplies that are surplus to operational needs. The State has the infrastructure to move the water, but until SDIP is approved, the state's water managers cannot fully or responsibly use the existing system. SDIP calls for only a 3-5% increase in the average amount of water pumped from the Delta. More significantly, SDIP will provide the flexibility to shift the timing of water deliveries when surplus is available and when environmentally safe to do so. SDIP is a starting point for California water interests to advance. And, funding for the program has already been secured through passage of voter approved bonds in 2000 (Proposition 13).

Additionally, SDIP will help protect important Delta environmental resources. Specifically, it will help protect fish species in the Delta channels. At the same time, by providing the state greater flexibility in how and when SDIP operates its system of pumps, fish are granted greater protections.

Given all these points, SDIP is supported by a statewide, broad coalition of water, agriculture, business, planning organizations, and local government officials including the Association of California Water Agencies, State Water Contractors, California Chamber of Commerce, California Business Properties Association and the Western Growers Association.

Water is the lifeblood of California – critical to our families, farms, and businesses. It is our responsibility to use this precious resource wisely through all possible best management practices, including water conservation, recycling and storage, to ensure California's water future. It is imperative that we have a more flexible water delivery system so that we can continue to accommodate growth in our population and economy while relying on existing water supplies.

Again, we strongly support SDIP and encourage all key stakeholders to help advance this critically needed project.

Respectfully,



Dale K. Melville, Manager-Engineer  
Dudley Ridge Water District

cc: Hon. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Mr. Ryan Brodderick, Director, California Department of Fish and Game  
Mr. Mike Chrisman, Secretary, California Resources Agency  
Mr. Joe Grindstaff, Director, California Bay-Delta Authority  
Mr. Kirk Rodgers, Regional Director, Mid-Pacific Region, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
Mr. Dan Skopec, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor  
Mr. Terry Tamminen, Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor  
Dudley Ridge Water District Board of Directors  
Mr. Gary W. Sawyers, Esq.  
Mr. Terry Erlewine, State Water Contractors