

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

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 California State Assembly

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 California State Senate

April 13, 2020

Karla Nemeth
 Director, CA Dept. of Water Resources
 via email: Karla.Nemeth@water.ca.gov

Kathryn Mallon
 Executive Director, Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority
 via email: KathrynMallon@dcdca.org

Dear Director Nemeth and Ms. Mallon,

I am writing on behalf of the Delta Protection Commission (Commission), a State agency working to ensure that the State's co-equal goals for the Delta are accomplished in a manner that protects and enhances Delta cultural, recreational, agricultural, and natural resource values. The Commission requests that Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA) pause all Delta Conveyance Project planning and engineering design processes that require Delta stakeholder engagement during the COVID-19 crisis, until Delta communities can fully participate in these processes.

At our April 9, 2020 Delta Protection Commission meeting, our Commission heard from Delta residents and Native American tribal interests requesting a pause in stakeholder engagement efforts during the current COVID-19 emergency. Members of our Commission concurred with these requests, and are concerned that complicated and far-reaching activities are occurring during a period when people are rightly focused on surviving this emergency situation.

As the lead staff person for the Commission, I understand the need to continue basic agency activities. Our Commission's April 9 public meeting was a telephone-based meeting and was challenging to conduct in a manner that enabled full participation by the public, even without attempting to communicate complicated and detailed information or to take action on controversial matters.

I have attended and participated in most meetings of the DCA Stakeholder Engagement Committee, including in-person and via remote webcast. It was clear to me from the remote webcast participation that I was unable to fully comprehend the material being presented. So much of the current SEC information involves maps, schematics and complicated material that is difficult to grasp even when one is present in the room to

fully comprehend what is being presented. It is difficult to imagine how this information can be relayed in a truly remote meeting format, not to mention the immediate challenges that SEC members have in both conducting their personal lives and reaching out to the communities they represent on the SEC to obtain their input on the information presented.

The Delta Conveyance Project is a monumental project for the Delta region with significant potential deleterious impacts. It is only appropriate that planning and engineering design processes that require the good-faith participation of a wide range of affected parties be conducted when stay-at-home orders are lifted and Delta stakeholders can again fully participate.

I thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Erik Vink

cc: Delta Protection Commission members