

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, February 21, 2013

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**Reps. Miller and Matsui Lead Letter Calling for Consideration of a
Portfolio-Based Conceptual Alternative for the BDCP**

*Alternative proposed by coalition of Northern and Southern California
water agencies, and business and environmental groups*

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressman George Miller (CA-11) and Congresswoman Doris Matsui (CA-06) led a letter to Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar urging him to provide full consideration to a portfolio-based conceptual alternative for the BDCP proposed by a coalition of Northern and Southern California water agencies, and business and environmental groups. The letter was also signed by six other Members of Congress representing communities in the Bay Delta region: Reps. McNerney, Thompson, Speier, Garamendi, Bera and Huffman.

“The health of California’s economy and environment is at a crossroads. The decisions being made now will leave a lasting legacy for decades to come and frankly, the approach to date has been wanting. Undertaking a project of such vast and far-reaching impact as the Bay Delta Conservation Plan necessitates considering more than just the Governor’s proposal. We need to get it right,” said Miller. “In particular, this portfolio alternative, endorsed by a diverse array of state-wide interests, encompasses a broad range of measures to increase water reliability throughout the state while saving the fragile Bay Delta environment from devastating water loss. It is incumbent upon the Department and the State to balance the needs of all stakeholders involved.”

“In order for California to solve its water problems with a long-term solution, we must consider all of the options available to us. The portfolio approach has the support of a diverse coalition and includes recommendations from the Delta communities that will be most affected. I implore the State to include and study this approach as one of the alternatives in its environmental documents for the BDCP. The usual excuses of no time or money cannot be applied here; this issue is too important. The taxpayers of California deserve no less than thorough consideration of this viable alternative,” said Congresswoman Matsui.

"The administration needs to stand up and take notice: No plan moving forward affecting the Bay-Delta region should be considered without every alternative considered, including alternatives that represent the interests of all stakeholders - most significantly the families, farmers and business owners who would be devastated by any action related to the Delta. Only

then can we move in the direction of finding a plan that will be equitable for all stakeholders and meet California's water supply needs," said Congressman McNerney (CA-09).

"Every reasonable solution to California's water challenges must be fully examined before we act on any proposals. The comprehensive alternative developed by local stakeholder groups is one example of such a proposal. It will protect wildlife and the livelihoods of the families, farmers, fishers and small businesses that depend on the Delta while ensuring reliable water deliveries throughout the state. It should be fully examined," said Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-05).

"The BDCP can and must consider alternatives that meet California's water needs while protecting fish and wildlife. A new proposal that should be considered, but that is not currently on the table, was put forward by a broad coalition of stakeholders that includes business owners, farmers, fishers, and members of Delta communities. The coalition-backed portfolio approach is based in sound science and should be recognized and evaluated as a viable plan for the Delta," said Congresswoman Jackie Speier (CA-14).

"Proponents of the current peripheral tunnel plan are fixated on spending limited taxpayer dollars on a plumbing system that won't create a drop of new water. Californians aren't swallowing it," said Congressman John Garamendi (CA-3). "Experience and common sense show that overcoming this challenge requires a multifaceted scientific approach. To address the water needs of our entire state, we need a comprehensive science-driven plan that grows our water supply through water conservation, recycling, and storage, habitat restoration, and levee improvements. The 'portfolio approach' includes these elements and deserves full consideration."

"Water supply and availability has long been an issue affecting the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta." said Congressman Bera (CA-07). "We must consider all the options that are available so that sound science help determine the proper course of action. This is critical for our health and well-being, for our environment, and for our economy."

The full text of the letter is below:

February 21, 2013

The Hon. Ken Salazar
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington DC

The Hon. Rebecca Blank
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington DC

Dear Secretary Salazar and Acting Secretary Blank:

We are writing you regarding the process that your agencies are using to consider alternatives for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) to protect the Bay Delta and to meet water needs. We urge you to provide full consideration to a portfolio-based conceptual alternative for the BDCP from a coalition of Northern and Southern California water agencies, and business and

environmental groups.

The alternative proposed by these groups represents an effort to integrate many recommendations into an alternative that includes actions both in the Delta and in the communities that rely on exported Delta water. As you know, over the past several years, we have urged your agencies to explore just such an approach.

The portfolio approach has two advantages. First, it can provide a more comprehensive and cost-effective solution that could be superior from both an environmental and economic perspective. Second, this approach was developed by and has united a diverse coalition. It also includes many recommendations offered by the Delta community, which has regrettably been largely ignored in the BDCP process. Your agencies should aggressively explore the potential for this alternative to bring together a wide cross-section of California's competing water interests.

We understand that BDCP is already planning to analyze a 3,000 cubic feet per second conveyance facility. An alternative with that facility size alone, however, is not enough. This conceptual alternative includes a small facility, scientifically-based flow and pumping rules, and a broad, integrated package of actions that, together, represent a promising approach. The BDCP's alternative that includes a small facility must be designed to be as successful as possible. A small facility, considered in isolation, is not a reasonable approach. An alternative with a small facility must include the integrated approach described in this conceptual alternative.

As we have discussed many times, it is essential that the BDCP incorporate strategies outside of the Bay-Delta as part of a portfolio-based alternative in order to efficiently and effectively protect the Delta and meet water demands. As such, these strategies must be analyzed in at least one stand-alone alternative, rather than, for example, an analysis in an appendix to a NEPA document.

In particular, we urge you to include, in this alternative, the operations proposal developed by state and federal biologists over the past year, based on the best available science. This should include all analyses and subsequent refinements that have shown the achievement of spring outflow targets with protections for tributary reservoir and biological operations. This will help to ensure that BDCP's final project operations requirements meet environmental needs, including for California's salmon fishery, both in the Delta and upstream.

For the BDCP to be successful, it must yield a plan that can be permitted, that meets legal requirements, that provides a more reliable water supply for California and that protects, restores, and enhances the Delta ecosystem. In short, the BDCP should actively seek -- and fully evaluate -- credible comprehensive alternatives like this one.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

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