



PRESS RELEASE

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Delta Coalition Initiates Legal Action on Illegal Pollution Discharges

SACRAMENTO, CA – The [Coalition for a Sustainable Delta](http://www.sustainabledelta.com) today issued a Notice of Intent to sue the City of Stockton and San Joaquin County for discharging toxic chemicals and other pollutants into the heart of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The legal action, under the federal Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act, targets the city's and county's municipal storm sewer system which has repeatedly exceeded pollution and contaminant limitations.

"Today's legal action is designed to address toxic urban run-off, a significant and growing threat to water quality and the overall health of the declining Bay-Delta ecosystem," said Michael Boccadoro, a spokesperson for the Coalition. "Unless and until regulators and policymakers address all of the factors or "stressors" that are combining to impact the estuary, we will continue to see the Delta decline and the state's economy suffer as a consequence."

For more than a century the Delta has undergone significant changes caused by human activities ranging from the creation an extensive system of levees to urbanization that poses significant and ever-increasing threats to the critically important estuary. The Delta region has expanded from about 1.3 million people in 1960 to more than 3.6 million residents today. This rapid growth is having a tremendous and unchecked impact on the Delta and the native species it supports. Untreated and under-treated toxic urban storm water and municipal wastewater discharges from many sources in the Bay-Delta are widely believed to pose a significant and growing threat to the health of the ecosystem as well as endangered and threatened native fish species such as the delta smelt, longfin smelt and Chinook salmon.

"Urban storm water discharges often contain highly toxic heavy metals, oil and other petroleum products as well as pesticides, all of which are taking a huge toll on the estuary," Boccadoro said. "It is clear that greater regulation and enforcement will be necessary to protect and sustain the Delta."

The City and County combine to be one of the worst offenders, discharging highly toxic pollutants and other contaminants directly into the Bay-Delta. The two agencies annually discharge millions of gallons of untreated storm water and have a long and well-documented history of exceeding pollution requirements under the Clean Water Act. Exceedances of specific toxic contaminants discharged by the City and County storm system have included, but are not limited to: **copper, mercury, DDT, iron, heptachlor, aldrin and diazinon**. The violations often exceed standards by tens or even hundreds of times the receiving water standard, including one violation for DDT which was 150 times the allowable level. The effects of these contaminants can be lethal to native fishes and other aquatic organisms critical to the food web. Other impacts on fish include decreased ability to avoid predation and impaired ability to reproduce. Growing scientific evidence suggests that chronic exposure to toxic pollutants and synergistic effects of multiple contaminants along with other stressors, such as ammonia from wastewater discharges, are causing significant ecosystem deterioration.

"Stockton is clearly a bad actor, but their pollution problems are shared by municipal agencies throughout the Delta," Boccadoro concluded.

The latest legal action is part of a comprehensive effort by the Coalition for a Sustainable Delta to highlight and address a long list of stressors that are impacting the estuary. Other issues being pursued by the Coalition include predation by non-native striped bass, the impacts of major in-delta power plant operations and the growing threat posed by municipal wastewater discharges in the region.

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For more information including a copy of the legal filing, visit www.sustainabledelta.com

For background information on the chemicals and contaminants referenced in this release visit the Pesticide Action Network Database at www.pesticideinfo.org