

# Portfolio plan falls short

Follow [@DeltaWatch](#) on Twitter

The Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) is designed to meet the two coequal goals established by the Legislature in 2009: creating a more reliable water supply and restoring the Delta ecosystem. According to a recent analysis by the Natural Resources Agency, the “portfolio alternative,” which has been championed by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and several other groups, does neither.

The “portfolio alternative” has been held out as more prudent than the BDCP’s preferred alternative, relying on a smaller tunnel conveyance system and local water supply investments. The alternative seeks to produce similar benefits to the BDCP for a smaller price tag, but it fails to meet either of the coequal goals with a still hefty price tag, thus making the investment a non-starter for the water users who are ultimately paying for implementation of much of the BDCP.

[The Natural Resources Agency analysis](#) of the “portfolio alternative” draws the following conclusions:

- ◆ Building a 3,000 cfs tunnel has a benefit/cost ratio of less than 1, and results in a reduction in the Delta water supply of 500,000 acre feet per year, as compared to the preferred 9,000 cfs facility.
- ◆ Investment in protecting the water supply from the Delta is the most cost effective way to protect

an important source of water supply for 25 million Californians and over 3 million acres of farmland from disruption.

- ◆ Based on the best available science, tidal marsh is important habitat for some species of concern in



the Delta and DWR is committed to doing more restoration in this area, not less, in order to meet the biological goals and objectives of the BDCP, but the “portfolio” plan may undermine this biological objective by drastically reducing the amount of habitat restoration.

**Bottom-line, the “portfolio alternative” would cost two-thirds the price of the draft BDCP proposal, but only provide one-third of the benefits.**

- ◆ Building a 3,000 cfs tunnel would leave California dangerously exposed to a 75 percent reduction in Delta water

supply after a major earthquake or storm resulting in levee failure.

Bottom-line, the “portfolio alternative” would cost two-thirds the price of the draft BDCP proposal, but only provide one-third of the benefits. That just doesn’t add up to a smart investment.

The Natural Resources Agency has led the way on the BDCP in order to achieve the coequal goals of creating a reliable water supply for those dependent on the Delta and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The portfolio alternative includes a number of sound ideas that should be incorporated into a broader, statewide water plan for California, but it fails to meet legislatively mandated coequal goals for Delta restoration and the state’s long-term water needs.



# Delta Watch

## A Project of the Coalition for a Sustainable Delta