

San Francisco lacking consistency on water policy

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The City of San Francisco recently [lambasted a proposal](#) that could cut water deliveries to the city from the Tuolumne River (a tributary to the San Joaquin River and, ultimately, the Delta) at a March meeting held by the State Water Resources Control Board. City representatives provided a detailed presentation showing the economic harm that such cuts in water would have on the City's residents and businesses and urged the Water Board to rethink its actions.

There is truth behind San Francisco's assumptions of economic harm. Cuts in water deliveries could be harmful to a region's economy, especially when that region has few alternative supplies to make up for the loss. Central Valley farmers and residents have become all too familiar with these economic hardships, which will worsen without cooperation of all water users.

Regrettably, San Francisco has not been very consistent in its stance on water issues. When it comes to other communities, such as the San Joaquin Valley, San Francisco is all too eager to cut water supplies that would have devastating economic effects on the agriculturally-based economy of that region.

The City of San Francisco has the luxury of taking its water from the Tuolumne River, before it reaches the Delta. With its own water supplies already secured, San Francisco has been one of the proponents of the

“portfolio alternative” being pushed by steadfast opponents of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). The proposed alternative would shrink the water delivery capacity of a new Delta water conveyance system by one-third. Central Valley farmers that rely on Delta water deliveries would be forced to rely on already overdrafted groundwater supplies, and a smaller conveyance system would reduce the ability to recharge those basins. For other farmers in the Central Valley, they have no other options but to fallow acreage or not water trees.



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The [State Water Contractors estimate](#) that this “portfolio option” that San Francisco supports would put over 700,000 acres of Central Valley farmland at risk

and according to [recent reports by the Fresno Bee](#), Central Valley communities are already bracing for food lines in areas affected by a lack of irrigation water this year.

San Francisco has done the research for its own economy. The City knows how devastating cuts in water deliveries can be for an urban region. California needs a water solution that benefits the entire state, rooted in the “co-equal goals” of ecosystem restoration in the Delta and statewide improvements in water supply reliability. Solutions that achieve anything less are unacceptable.



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A Project of the Coalition for a Sustainable Delta