

San Geronio Pass Water Agency secures investment for future water supplies

The board of directors ensured necessary long term imported water supplies to the region on Nov. 16 when they voted unanimously to support the Delta Conveyance Project (DCP).

This is a major infrastructure project slated to begin construction around 2030 that will greatly enhance the operations and reliability of the State Water Project (SWP).

The SWP captures water originating from the Sierra-Nevada Mountains and transports it to 29 State Water Contractors throughout the state.

This water would normally flow from the mountains, to various rivers, through the San Joaquin Delta and ultimately be lost to the Pacific Ocean via the San Francisco Bay.

water project and supports the world's 5th largest economy.

This system includes aqueducts, pump stations, dams, reservoirs and other facilities to distribute water to municipal and agricultural entities along its 444 mile length. Captured water starts its journey south, at the Delta.

Water is pumped for many miles across the Delta as a "natural conveyance".

Using the Delta to move water was initially used as a cost saving measure to get the project started with the intention of a modern conveyance to come later.

In 1982, the Peripheral Canal was a state ballot measure that would move water around the Delta and would be a major step in finishing the SWP as intended in the

Jerry Brown later publicly expressed regret about being unable to finish his father's project.

In the meantime, using the Delta as a surrogate for a modern engineered conveyance was becoming more problematic.

Endangered fish, invasive plants, water quality problems and a host of increasing regulatory constraints made it harder and harder to pump water through the Delta. Governor Jerry Brown returned as the state's 39th governor in 2011 and one of his primary objectives was to finish modernizing the Delta conveyance.

The 2015 "California Water Fix" was an ambitious plan to build a two-tunnel system underneath the Delta.

A change in leadership in 2019 with Gavin Newsom, along with North vs. South tensions, resulted in a compromise large one-tunnel system and a rebrand to the "Delta Conveyance Project (DCP)".

The DCP will consist of two intakes along the northern portion of the Delta, adjacent to the Sacramento River, and approximately 42 miles of tunnel.

Two potential routes have been proposed.

When completed, the project will have a maximum capacity of roughly 12,000 acre-feet of water per day (one acre-foot of water will generally support about 2+ California households for a year).

The DCP materially increases the reliability of imported water supply, finishes a major component originally planned as part of the SWP, and helps protect the 60 years of investment in the project.

The DCP will allow import-



Photo via San Geronio Water Agency

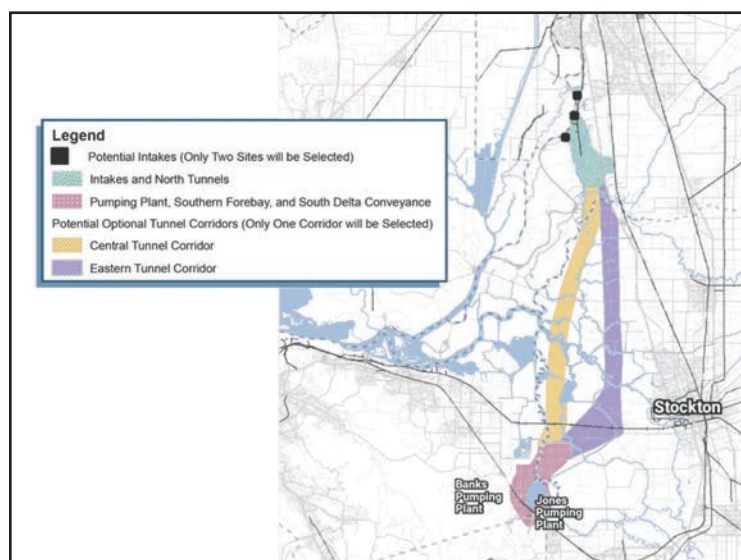


Photo via San Geronio Water Agency

The SWP was built under the leadership of the state's 32nd Governor, Edmund G. "Pat" Brown served 1959-1967.

Construction of the SWP, initiated in 1961, is the nation's largest state-built

1960s.

Fueled by Northern vs. Southern California rivalry, the ballot measure failed.

Incidentally, Edmund's G. Brown's son, Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, was governor during this time.

ed supplies to flow underneath a labyrinth of environmental/regulatory restrictions.

The DCP is also a hedge against major existential threats, such as a seismic event in the Delta or projected sea level rise, both of which would bring saline water into the Delta and could severely hamper water exports for years.

The SGPWA Board approved a minimum 1.22% participation level in the DCP to support local water demands.

This results in an estimated increased of supply to the region of over 7,000 acre-feet per year.

The Board also directed General Manager Lance Eckhart to increase the Agency's participation level if extra capacity in the project

became available.

The project is estimated to cost approximately 15.9 billion dollars and payments will be spread over 40 years.

Construction payments are likely to begin in the 2030s. Many of the current SGPWA SWP costs are expected to end in 2035 and local property taxes are expected to easily cover the region's share of the projected DCP costs.

Board President Ron Duncan remarked "I was happy to see four directors seal their legacy of assuring the regional water supply for decades to come by voting in favor of the project."

With the anticipated recent election results, this vote represents the last major decision for Directors Lenny Stephenson, David Castaldo, Mike Thompson and David Fenn.

Beaumont rebuffs mayor's initial call to give CARES Act funds to its chamber of commerce

BY DAVID JAMES HEISS
Record Gazette

Beaumont Mayor Rey Santos was so excited to bring forth a proposal to his city council in recommending a \$20,000 contribution of its CARES Act funding to the Beaumont Chamber of Commerce.

After all, the city has been helping its local businesses by doling out \$3,000 grants in relief funding to businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19 through its Business Assistance Program.

In his mind, the chamber would welcome the funds, and likely approve having the city's mayor be appointed to a seat on the chamber's board of directors, which would be stipulated as part of a memorandum of understanding.

So far, 24 businesses have received relief funding from a \$141,000 business impact program, which had a remaining balance of \$69,000 for grant awards.

"The chamber is part of our local businesses, whose mission is to promote local businesses," Santos said during his Nov. 17 council meeting. "As the local business community has suffered, the chamber has also suffered," he pointed out. "I appeal to this council to provide a helping hand," which would be paid in two installments, \$10,000 before the end of 2020, and the rest in the first quarter of 2021, and, since it was coming out of CARES Act funding, would not be taxpayer money coming out of city coffers.

Council members all expressed their appreciation for what the chamber does in the city.

But Santos's ambition to simply dole out \$20,000 to a nonprofit entity, when no other nonprofits received Business Assistance Program funding, triggered concerns from his colleagues.

Councilman Julio Martinez was the first to chime in, explaining that the city was

still reviewing how effective its initial business grants have been, and was worried that another round of grants may have to be distributed if Congress doesn't provide more stimulus funding or COVID-19 relief assistance.

He wanted to know: if the city offers grants to the chamber, in fairness would the city also have to open the door to allow other nonprofits who are struggling to also apply for financial assistance from the city.

He wanted to know if the chamber's books would have to be made accessible to the city as businesses receiving funds have to do when receiving relief funds.

"I'm really not sure public funds are justified for this purpose," Martinez said. "I want to make it clear that I'm not entirely opposed to the idea at all. I don't know if the timing is right, or if we need more discussion, because I don't want to open the door for something we may not be ready for without doing eval-

uations of what we've done already."

Councilman Mike Lara agreed with Martinez's sentiments.

"With the amount we have remaining" in the Business Assistance Program "it appears we have the opportunity to do another round" of BAP distributions, "if we do do that, I would not be opposed to having the chamber submit an application to be considered for the \$3,000 stimulus like we have for other businesses," Lara said. "What may be more prudent for us — more fiscally responsible — is to exchange the money for services rendered" for services at events such as ribbon cuttings for new businesses, and socials events for business retention, which Lara explained would have to be provided for all businesses, and not simply chamber members "because as a city, we have to support everybody."

His thought was that the chamber come up with a list

of such events, and estimates of what it would cost the chamber, which the city could include as an added budget item on an annual basis, and the list would have to be approved each year by the sitting council if the city could afford to do so."

Lara said he would be more comfortable with that approach, since the city "would be paying for an actual service that the chamber would provide for us — and some of these items the chamber is already doing," which could mean the city could supplement some of the chamber's budget for those events, but the city and the city's businesses would receive a benefit in exchange for such a transaction.

Councilwoman Nancy Carroll empathized, saying "I can see that the chamber was impacted significantly by the pandemic," pointing out that a large portion of its revenues comes from businesses pay-

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