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A Fix or a Farce?

The Governor's decision to split the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) in two parts, the California Water Fix, and California Eco Restore, makes some sense. The 70,000 acres of "habitat restoration" that has been dropped in going from the BDCP to California Eco Restore is no loss because it would not have done any good anyway, and getting on with some restoration projects that have been stalled forever but are required under various existing agreements is not a bad thing. But, the California Water Fix is a farce. One of the principal points of my written comments, and those of others, on the EIR/EIS for the BDCP, was that an adequate study of alternatives had never been conducted, even under the limited rules for studying alternatives under CEQA. To simply change the preferred alternative from 4 to 4A without conducting a proper alternatives study is just one of the things that means this Fix is dead on arrival. And, it is especially surprising since the Governor had said at least twice "that we will spend the next year looking to see if anyone has a better alternative", once in the sole gubernatorial debate and once on a sidewalk in Williams.

Well Jerry, someone does have a better idea and it is called the Western Delta Intakes Concept. This concept is based on the premise that the South Delta pumps are a dead end for fish and the logical place to extract water that is surplus to the needs of Northern California and the Delta, is as far west as you can go in the Delta before impacting the zone where fresh and salt water mix. Then you have a self-regulating system because if you try to over-pump, you will be sucking salt water into the export system. Otherwise water quality would not be as good as it is in the North Delta but it would be better than it is in the South Delta. Special provisions have to be made when extracting water at this location because it is critical for passage of both smelt and salmon, but this is something that can be done at moderate cost and with high reliability. This concept is also designed to extract more water than at present during periods of high flow, with the excess over current demand being used to replenish the groundwater basins in the San Joaquin, which are on their way to China along with the almonds. So, it is true Big Gulp when you can and Little or No Sip when you can't, as opposed to the false claims that were made for the BDCP. And this concept restores more natural flows through the Delta, both in pattern and quantity so that your habitat restoration (and our additional measures) might actually do some good.

For more details go to <http://fixCAwater.com>.

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