

**Robert Pyke, Consulting Engineer**

## **An Open Letter on the California Water Fix – Part 8**

### **Is It a Legacy Project or a Vanity Project?**

California Governor Jerry Brown's support of High Speed Rail and the Twin Tunnels under the Delta (now called the California Water Fix) is often explained by these being legacy projects, in the same way that the enlarged California higher education system and the State Water Project are said to be legacies of his father, Pat Brown. But this analogy does not stand scrutiny as suggested in a recent column by Dan Walters in the Sacramento Bee <http://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/dan-walters/article25645969.html> Even though the State's higher education system now has some challenges, as does the State Water Project, for many years these were widely considered to be great successes, so that they did burnish the legacy of Pat Brown. But, as Dan Walters suggests, there is scant evidence that either High Speed Rail or the Twin Tunnels will ever be built, let alone be a success, so why does the Governor support them, other than to retain the support of the construction trade unions and Southern California and Silicon Valley business interests? The answer seems to be in part at least that, in spite of the fact that in a recent BBC television interview the Governor said that Leninist principles do not work well in a state as complex as California, he does in fact hold a Leninist or Stalinist view that the Government, that is Jerry, has a vision of the future and knows what is best for the people, whether they have the same vision or not.

That position might hold slightly more water (pun intended) for High Speed Rail than it does for The Fix. Even though the current High Speed Rail plans make no engineering or economic sense, the vision that we cannot or should not rely on jet-fuel burning aircraft to move us between the Bay Area and Southern California forever has some merit. But the solution is not the current relatively low speed project from one or two points in the Bay Area to one point in the Greater Los Angeles Area.

But that position holds no water at all relative to the Twin Tunnels, which not only do not make engineering and economic sense but also make no environmental sense, despite propaganda to the contrary. The Tunnels are mostly about improved water quality for the Metropolitan Water District at the expense of flows and water quality in the Delta. There is no way you can spin that into a win for the environment. A separate puzzle is that The Fix and its predecessor, the BDCP, started under the previous Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, but now Governor Brown claims it as his own.

So, if these are not legitimate legacy projects, what are they? The answer is that they are vanity projects.

See <http://FixCAWater.com> for the other parts of this letter, and much more.

**1310 Alma Avenue, No. W201, Walnut Creek, CA 94596**

**Telephone 925.323.7338 E-mail [bobpyke@attglobal.net](mailto:bobpyke@attglobal.net) Web <http://rpce.us>**