



San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation

Good morning SJFB Members

Join San Joaquin Farm Bureau and the SJFB Farmers United PAC next Wednesday, October 12th, 2022 at the Robert J. Cabral Agriculture Center, 2101 E. Earhart Ave., Stockton, CA 95206, at 6:00 pm for a second Candidate Night! Members will have the opportunity to meet and personally speak with SJFB endorsed candidates as well as both candidates from neutral races. Refreshments will be provided. Please be sure to RSVP with the number of folks that will be attending in your group. You can RSVP via email to staff@sjfb.org or by calling the SJFB office, (209) 931-4931. We hope to see you all next week and hope that you are having a good harvest season!



Farm Bureau & Community Members
are invited to a



CANDIDATE NIGHT

Hear from candidates running in the November
2022 election and speak one-on-one with them.
Refreshments provided.

WEDNESDAY OCT. 12, 2022 | 6 PM
ROBERT J. CABRAL AGRICULTURAL CENTER
2101 EARHART AVENUE, STOCKTON

Brian Dahle | CA Governor

John Duarte | U.S House, CA 13 Congressional District

Steve Ding | SJ Supervisors District 4

Carlos Villapudua | CA State Assembly District 13

Heath Flora | CA State Assembly District 12

Paul Canepa | SJ Supervisor District 2

Elbert Holman | SJ Supervisor District 2

Josh Harder | U.S. House, CA 9th Congressional District

Tom Patti | U.S. House, CA 9th Congressional District

SPECIAL GUESTS

Ron Freitas | SJ District Attorney Elect

Sheriff Pat Withrow | SJ Sheriff

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UNITED PAC

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State not ponying up enough \$\$ for farmland retirement, critics say

Sjvwater.org, 09/29/22

Though \$40 million was added to the state's farmland retirement pot, some worry it won't be nearly enough.

Gov. Gavin Newsom authorized the funding Tuesday night to be added to the state's new Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program.

The program, initially funded with \$50 million in 2021, pays for farmland to be taken out of production and repurposed to less water intensive uses such as groundwater recharge facilities, habitat for wildlife and open spaces for recreation.

The added \$40 million brings total funding to \$90 million, but is just a "drop in the bucket," according to Ann Hayden, associate vice president of nonprofit Environmental Defense Fund's (EDF) water program. EDF has worked closely with the state and other organizations involved in the repurposing program.

The state senate originally proposed the program receive an additional \$500 million, which was significantly whittled down during budget negotiations.

"We were disappointed to see that they held steady at \$40 million," said Hayden.

The repurposing program is part of a statewide effort to address plummeting groundwater levels, particularly in the San Joaquin Valley, where declining aquifers have sometimes left entire communities without drinking water, sunk land and damaged infrastructure.

Some estimates are that nearly one million acres of farmland will need to be taken out of production in the valley to reach groundwater sustainability.

Nobody has done a rigorous economic analysis of what that will cost, said Hayden. But she suspects it could be well over \$1 billion.

"So that puts the total of \$90 million in context," said Hayden. "And that's important."

The first round of the program saw interest exceed available funding. Three valley agencies were among the successful applicants and each received \$10 million for repurposing projects. Those include the Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District, Pixley Irrigation District Groundwater Sustainability Agency and Madera County.

Last week was the kickoff meeting with the grantees from the first round of funding, the state Department of Conservation, EDF and nonprofit Self-Help Enterprises.

Hayden expects demand to outpace the funding again this time around.

“If the state truly wants to move the needle on building drought resilience, then it must invest a lot more in this critically important program,” Hayden wrote in an email. “Without sufficient funding to help farmers strategically transition lands to new beneficial uses that require less water, we could be on the road to creating a dust bowl in the valley.”

Oakley City Council Opposes Resurrected Delta tunnel proposal

Thepress.net, 09/29/22

Forty years before Donald Trump coined his “Stop the Steal” campaign, California’s voters used the phrase to oppose and defeat the proposed Peripheral Canal. Back then the prize wasn’t electoral success, but something far more precious here—water.

It’s the Big Pipe That Won’t Die.

The proposal (under a variety of names) to build a pipe to ship Northern Californian water to Southern California has been the subject of fighting words for decades. Governors from Jerry Brown to Arnold Schwarzenegger to Gavin Newsom have backed the concept that aims to divert fresh water from the upper reaches of the Sacramento River, bypass the Delta river network and pump it to southern state faucets and farmers.

The last time it appeared before voters was in 1982 when a ballot initiative backing the Canal went down to defeat. Before the vote, billboards on both sides of the issue lined highways north and south of the state, television campaigns filled the airwaves and radio hosts sparked heated debates. A coalition of northern state environmentalists, Delta farmers, water districts and fishing groups united to battle the well-funded campaign for passage. Corporate farming groups and Los Angeles’ powerful Metropolitan Water District spent millions to back the massive plumbing project.

While the proposal was left to history’s dusty news clips, the concept never died. In 2016, Brown proposed a new version featuring two massive tunnels to divert water south. Brown included the tunnel plan as part of his \$25 billion California Water Fix and Eco Restore project. The governor struggled to gain legislative support for the plan during his last term.

Newsom has now offered his version, which features a single tunnel called the Delta Conveyance Project, or Delta Tunnel.

In a public joint meeting held this week at the Diablo Water District headquarters, members of the Oakley City Council, the Ironhouse Sanitary District and the water district met to hear an update on the Delta Tunnel from Ryan Hernandez, a planner with the Contra Costa County Water Agency and two lawyers with the environmental law office Soluri Meserve based in Sacramento.

Why now? The state recently released the tunnel’s draft environmental impact report. The battle lines are drawn. The public comment period on the report will be open until Dec. 16.

Struggling to hold up one hefty binder, Osha Meserve noted Monday night, “It counts more than 3,000 pages and we’re still studying it.”

In a two-hour PowerPoint presentation, Osha Meserve and Patrick Soluri offered their arguments against the “big dig:”

- The tunnel is a threat.
- A tunnel takes fresh water, bypassing the ecosystem = less water through the Delta.
- Improves export water quality at expense of water quality for Delta residents and farming.
- A tunnel provides no incentive to help protect and improve water quality in the Delta

Meserve also detailed the massive impacts that the \$16 billion project would bring with it: more than 13 years of construction affecting air quality, noise, traffic, business disruptions and economic losses. She added that permanent impacts would affect municipal and agriculture water quality, endangered species, recreation, social impacts to Delta communities and additional loss of Delta farmland (for habitat restoration).

Meserve focused at one point on the refuse left behind by the tunneling process, or “tunnel muck,” which alone could result in 123 acres of muck piled 15 feet high across a 550-acre complex. “What do you do with it all?” The tunnel is expected to be bored at 45-feet wide and buried at a depth of 120-150 feet below the surface.

The original Peripheral Canal envisioned a 43-mile-long tunnel with a single intake capable of carrying 23,000 cubic feet per second of water. The current Delta Tunnel plan calls for a 45-mile long pipeline with two intakes capable of moving 6,000 cubic feet per second of water.

Meserve also outlined an alternative called “Freshwater Pathway.” This option emphasizes in-Delta storage sites, levee restoration and operable storage barriers.

Meserve said Tuesday, “I’m very pleased by the gathering that three agencies got together to pool their resources. People were very informed... when the public is engaged and looking for better solutions good things can happen.”

The Oakley Council members (Sue Higgins, George Fuller and Aaron Meadows) took an informal 3-0 vote to oppose the tunnel proposal at the end of the public hearing. The sanitary district also opposes the project and the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors has voted to oppose it as well.