



Lawsuit Challenges Metropolitan Water Authority's Purchase of Delta Islands

On April 14th the Planning and Conservation League, Food and Water Watch, San Joaquin County, Contra Costa County, and the Central Delta Water Agency sued the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) charging that its claim of complete exemption from environmental review for the proposed purchase of 20,000 acres of Delta islands and farmland is illegal and unjustified. The lawsuit asks the Court to enjoin MWD from purchasing the property unless and until it completes the environmental review required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

MWD has promoted this land purchase to clear the path for the "California Water Fix" twin tunnels project and remove obstacles to its completion. The purchase would also enable physical changes affecting the properties that may harm the Delta environment and could cost California ratepayers and taxpayers billions of dollars. The plaintiffs allege that the land purchase by MWD is part of an attempt to take more water from the Delta for MWD use and that the environmental impacts resulting from that activity would be "significant" and outside any exemption from CEQA.

MWD falsely asserts it is only interested in Delta habitat restoration and therefore its actions are exempt from any form of environmental review. Yet MWD's General Manager, and its own promotional materials, admit that the islands could facilitate building the \$20-67 billion twin tunnels under the Delta by reducing eminent-domain needs and providing a storage place for construction dirt.

Roger Moore, the attorney representing the Planning and Conservation League and Food and Water Watch, noted that "Metropolitan's outrageous claim that its Delta island purchase is too benign for environmental review can't be reconciled with its own promotional materials, which portray the island purchase as clearing the path for construction of the Delta tunnels. California's residents and ratepayers deserve a higher standard of candor and accountability."

"MWD board members need to overturn this illegal decision pressed on them by their general manager," said Jonas Minton, Water Policy Advisor for the Planning and Conservation League.

"It's not surprising that Metropolitan avoided a proper review as the land purchase is not in the interest of Southern California ratepayers and taxpayers," said Brenna Norton, Senior Organizer for Food & Water Watch. "This purchase would promote Metropolitan's effort to build the \$67 billion tunnels which will only benefit MWD 's bottom line—while costing Southern Californians billions and not providing one drop of new water."

For more information on the lawsuit to stop the purchase of islands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, [click here](#).

For more than 50 years, the Planning and Conservation League has been at the forefront of virtually every major legislative and administrative effort to protect and enhance California's environment. Today PCL is fighting everyday in the Capitol and around the state for clean air, clean water, natural resource conservation, environmental justice, and livable communities for all.

Help us help you. Contribute today to make certain our environment is protected for humans, plants and wildlife forever.

Make a Difference!

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Don't forget to keep your eyes open for the dates of PCL's upcoming Symposium's by [clicking here](#). Our 2nd UCLA School of Law Symposium will be taking place in October 2016, and our annual UC Davis School of Law Symposium will take place in January 2017. The Symposium's will focus on ways in which land use simultaneously affects the environment, the economy, public health, quality of life, and social justice.

PCL is also excited to announce that we will be having a Gala in San Francisco in November 2016 to celebrate our past 50 years of successes and look forward to the next 50 years!

If you would like more information on any PCL events, please contact Meredith Mitchell at mmitchell@pcl.org.



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