



 [The Planning and Conservation League](#)

PCL INSIDER: News from the Capitol

ONE DAY, TWO BAD IDEAS, HUNDREDS PROTEST: RALLIES HELD TO CHALLENGE PERIPHERAL TUNNELS AND FRACKING

Last Wednesday, hundreds of people flocked to the State Capitol to protest two stunningly bad ideas: 1) the Governor's proposed peripheral tunnels water conveyance project endorsement and 2) an expedited regulatory process for a controversial oil extraction practice known as "fracking".

As highlighted on our [blog](#), the morning started with Governor Brown's endorsement of a plan to build twin peripheral tunnels, each 37 miles long and 150 feet below-ground, in order to convey water from the San Francisco-San Joaquin Bay-Delta to Central Valley farmers and southern California residents. Because of large-scale opposition to the plan, the Governor moved his press conference to the Department of California Resources Agency offices and excluded the public from the announcement. In fact, rumors abounded that security was so tight that even some accredited media could not get access!

In response to Brown's announcement, opponents held a public rally on the West steps of the Capitol. Hundreds of environmental activists, local, state and federal elected officials, family farmers, fishers, tribal representatives, ratepayer advocates, and concerned members of the public gathered together to protest the \$50B plan that they contend is bad for the state. Some of the critiques of Brown's plan are: 1) it will maintain (and perhaps even expand) the amount of water diverted from Delta; 2) it will continue our 'business as usual' water transfers that are a huge energy-waster in California; 3) it employs a 'build it now and plan it later' approach; and 4) the plan benefit less than 1% of corporate agricultural interests at the expense of local communities.

PCL's Water Policy Advisor, Jonas Minton, was highlighted prominently [in the media](#) raising concerns with the proposal. At the rally, PCL's Executive Director Bruce Reznik joined dozens of speakers, highlighting ways the \$50B could be better spent to promote regional water self-sufficiency through a 'reduce, reuse, recycle and restore' approach.

Later that evening, activists from up and down the state gathered in front of the Cal-EPA building to demand a moratorium on fracking until we have the science and regulations in place to know whether or not these oil and gas extraction process can be done safely. The rally, which featured the 'Can't Frack This' dancers as well prominent environmental and community leaders, was held immediately prior to the last public workshop on fracking held by the Division of Oil Gas and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR). DOGGR, which has been [widely criticized](#) for turning a blind eye to fracking in California (even going so far as removing information on the practice from its website), is now seen as rushing through regulations without proper deliberation.

The practice of fracking, made (in)famous in the documentary [Gasland](#), has been linked to a wide array of environmental and community impacts, including exposure to toxic chemicals, groundwater contamination, threats to public health and wildlife, seismic events, greenhouse gas and air emissions, and impacts to agricultural lands, to name a few.

There are currently two bills related to fracking that will be decided on by the legislature over the next month. Assemblymember Betsy Butler (D-Marina del Rey) is proposing a [moratorium](#) on the practice, while Assemblyman Bob Wieckowski (D-Fremont) has legislation that would require oil companies to report to regulators and post on a website what chemicals they use and how much water they pump in hydraulic fracturing operations.

On the heels of a massive effort to get the legislature to appropriate bond funds for High Speed Rail, and prior to the November vote on his controversial tax measure, it seems politically challenging for the Governor to engage in two more highly controversial issues, especially his proposal to resurrect a new version of the Peripheral Canal that was rejected by nearly two-thirds of California voters (63%) in 1982.

Perhaps the Governor summed up his approach best at his feisty press conference, when he said "At this stage as I see many of my friends dying...I want to get sh*t done." Unfortunately, PCL is concerned that without taking the time to more fully consider his approach and engage impacted communities and environmental advocates, that is precisely what will get done.

EXPECT A BUMPY CEQA RIDE AHEAD

Governor's Misguided Attacks on Environmental Review Highlighted in Bee Article

Based on comments made by Governor Brown in yesterday's [Sacramento Bee](#), we can expect to see more attacks on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) being pushed by the Administration in the last month of legislative session starting next week. Specifically, the article references Brown's statements at last week's press conference announcing his proposed 'peripheral tunnels' that, "I've never seen a CEQA exemption I don't like". Although this remark was related specifically to his planned Bay-Delta conveyance project, the Governor has also decried what he sees as CEQA's role in limiting infill, industrial-scale solar, high speed rail, and a myriad of other projects that he deems important.

Although everyone is aware of Brown's penchant for 'quirky', occasionally hyperbolic (and sometimes contradictory) remarks, his continued assault on CEQA is unfortunate and misguided. As pointed out in a recent [blog post](#) from PCL's Executive Director, the Governor's rhetoric doesn't match the facts - even the facts from his own Administration!

While one of the Governor's primary complaints about CEQA is that he feels it hinders infill development, the [2012 Annual Planning Survey Results](#) report released by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research on May 3 seems to refute this assertion. Specifically, less than 5% of 238 city and county planning agencies surveyed in the report listed CEQA as a barrier to infill, ranking CEQA 12th of 16 possible barriers (and far behind factors like 'infrastructure constraints' and the 'poor economy').

The Bee article also notes that Brown's primary rationale for reducing or eliminating environmental review for certain projects is that he is singularly focused on addressing the scourge of climate change, and he feels CEQA may somehow impede that effort. This rationale is somewhat ironic because his latest pronouncement on CEQA was related to a project that will continue massive transfers of water from Northern California to Southern California, which is currently the most energy intensive strategy to enhance our water supplies. It has been estimated that 3%-5% of California's entire energy usage is related to transferring water from north to south through the State Water Project. In other words, the Governor wants to exempt environmental review for a project with a huge carbon footprint, while supposedly leading the charge against climate change. Huh?

For more than 40 years - in good economic times and bad - CEQA has played a pivotal role in protecting California's lands, air, waters and communities by promoting informed decision-making and civic engagement, as well as requiring projects to minimize and mitigate environmental

impacts. Yes, like any law, CEQA should be properly assessed with an eye towards any changes that may be needed to improve the law. But inflammatory rhetoric based on a foundation of misinformation is not the way to facilitate such a process.

Please let the Governor know you support strong environmental review and community protections afforded by CEQA by filling out an [online form](#), calling his office at (916) 445-2841 or sending a note to: Governor Jerry Brown, c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173 Sacramento, CA 95814.

REMINDER: THIS FRIDAY, AUGUST 3RD IS LAST DAY TO APPLY FOR PCL'S LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE POSITION!

As we mentioned in our last [Insider](#), August 3rd is the last day to get resumes in for our legislative advocate job opening. PCL is looking for an energetic, self-motivated individual to direct the Planning and Conservation League's legislative program. The Legislative Advocate will oversee PCL's legislative agenda, track all PCL priority bills, develop new legislation, and act as the primary spokesperson for PCL in the State Capitol. For a more detailed job description, please click [here](#). Resumes and cover letters can be submitted to resumes@pcl.org.

JOIN PCL AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS ON AUGUST 8 FOR "OVER TROUBLED WATERS" DELTA DOCUMENTARY PREMIER AT CREST THEATER

[Restore the Delta](#) presents "[Over Troubled Waters](#)", a story about the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta as told by the people who are fighting for this unique region and for sustainable water policy for the whole state. The documentary will premiere on August 8th at 7:00 p.m. at the [Crest Theater](#) in Sacramento.

This fascinating film shows interests on both sides of the "water war", shining a bright light on some of the claims that have been used to justify sending ever more of the Delta region's water to benefit corporate agriculture and big water development interests.

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased [online](#). PCL has a very limited number of free tickets for our supporters; if you are a current PCL member or have volunteered for PCL over the past year, please contact [Lauren Sucher](#).

If you miss the premier in Sacramento, the documentary will play again on August 20th in Stockton at the Empire Theater and then again on August 28th in Los Angeles at the Landmark Theater. To view the film trailer click [here](#).



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