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June 13, 2011

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News Release

Latino Water Coalition Supports Alternate Delta Plan

The California Latino Water Coalition (CLWC) announced today that it is in full agreement with the Ag-Urban Alternate Delta Plan. “The Coalition is very pleased to join urban and agricultural water agencies as well as other organizations from throughout California in requesting that the Delta Stewardship Council adopt this Delta Alternate Plan as one of the alternatives under the program’s environmental impact report (EIR),” said Mario Santoyo, CLWC Director. The upcoming environmental review process is mandated by the California Environmental Quality Act.

Santoyo noted that the Alternate Delta Plan “is strongly supported by such a large and diverse coalition of business and agricultural interests because of it is so vital that the Stewardship Council fulfill further the co-equal goals for the Delta as the Legislature directed in passing the state’s 2009 Comprehensive Water Package,” Santoyo said. The CLWC was instrumental in achieving passage of the five 2009 water package bills.

The CLWC agrees that the Alternate Delta Plan is vitally needed because it could significantly improve water supplies for all areas of the state. A coalition staff draft appears to be aimed at reducing water supplies.

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Many management tools would be employed under the Alternative Delta Plan. Those include local resources development, conveyance improvements, steps to address Delta stressors and other strategies to achieve the co-equal Delta goals. In sharp contrast, the staff drafts appear to focus on reducing Delta exports from current levels and augmenting flows to attempt to benefit fisheries.

“The one-dimensional approach advocated by the Council’s staff simply can’t achieve co-equal goals that are so vital for solving the Delta’s many water supply, infrastructure quality and environmental problems,” said Santoyo. He added that the Alternate Delta Plan would assure long-term water supplies and improved economic health within California’s agricultural economy.

“From what we can see, the latest staff drafts appear likely to continue doing what regulators have done to in damaging agricultural activity by reducing water supplies that depend upon Delta water exports,” Santoyo said.

The Alternate Delta Plan recognizes that accomplishing the co-equal goals will require unprecedented levels of partnership and collaboration. It uses a performance-based management approach while the latest staff drafts appear to rely on sets of prescriptive regulatory approaches to reduce Delta supplies.

The CLWC believes the Alternate Delta Plan will support a healthy and sustainable Delta economy that protects and enhances the unique values of the Delta consistent with the Delta Reform Act.

The CLWC is an advocate of constructive solutions and meaningful actions aimed at resolving California’s water crisis and related environmental problems. Many of these difficult and complex questions involve the Bay-Delta Estuary and have resulted in San Joaquin Valley and Southern California water supply curtailments over the past several years. Severe personal, economic and social impacts – some of the worst of which have been sustained by Latinos – are the consequence. The Coalition’s interest in achieving permanent and lasting Delta solutions is a recognition on the part of the CLWC’s members – Latino elected officials, civic, business and water leaders (and others) from throughout California – that Latinos are typically the first hurt and last to recover in economic catastrophes such as those caused by the Delta crisis.

“The Coalition believes in working together constructively to seek lasting solutions,” said Santoyo. “We’re hoping the Delta Stewardship Council will feel the same and provide momentum and collaboration as a far better bet than promoting discord and delay solutions by driving stakeholders away from the process through yet another regulatory approach.”