



### **Delta Counties Coalition**

Contra Costa County · Sacramento County · San Joaquin County · Solano County · Yolo County

*"Working together on water and Delta issues"*

February 1, 2023

Chuck Bonham, Director  
California Department of Fish and Game  
1416 9th Street, CA 95814  
[Director@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Director@wildlife.ca.gov)

### **Re: California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statutory Exemption for the Knightsen Wetland Restoration Project**

Dear Director Bonham:

The Delta Counties Coalition (DCC) writes to you in support of using the CEQA Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP) for the proposed Knightsen Wetland Restoration Project.

As you know, the DCC has expressed concerns about the use of the SERP for projects in the Delta. In our October 8, 2021 letter, we outlined our concerns and identified steps the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the Natural Resources Agency could take to ensure restoration projects that propose to use the SERP give due consideration to local plans, priorities, and concerns. The DCC supports well-planned restoration projects that protect the environment, local land use, and regional planning.

After review of the proposed Knightsen Wetland Restoration Project, the DCC supports the project and thinks use of the SERP is appropriate. The Knightsen Wetland Restoration Project proposal was developed at the local level, following local outreach, and complements local and regional planning. The Conservancy voluntarily completed the Good Neighbor Checklist<sup>1</sup> and continues to engage stakeholders as they finalize project design and permitting process.

The DCC's support for using the SERP for the Knightsen Wetland Restoration Project is based on important locally-driven features or elements of the project:

- The project is proposed by the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy, a local joint exercise of powers agency. The Conservancy is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP), a

<sup>1</sup> <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/delta-plan/2022-07-15-good-neighbor-checklist.pdf>

February 1, 2023

-2-

regional plan developed by Contra Costa County and cities in east Contra Costa County. This Conservancy's governing board is made up of elected officials from the County and the cities of Brentwood, Clayton, Oakley and Pittsburg. Because the project is locally-sponsored and was developed in coordination with local land use authorities and other relevant agencies, including Contra Costa County Public Works, Contra Costa County Flood Control, Contra Costa County Mosquito and Vector Control, and the East Contra Costa County Irrigation District, the DCC is not concerned that this project will interfere with surrounding land use plans.

- The project site is owned and operated by the East Bay Regional Park District, a local agency, as part of the Preserve System for the HCP/NCCP. The restoration project will help to achieve regional conservation goals identified in the HCP/NCCP.
- The project has gone through an extensive outreach process that included numerous public meetings over more than a decade. In recent years, through public funding from CDFW and the Delta Conservancy, the Conservancy engaged a third party facilitator to support the outreach process. These meetings and other outreach efforts are available to the public on the project's website: <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/7624/Knightsen-Wetland-Restoration-Project>

Upon reviewing the project materials and understanding the importance of this project to local agencies, the DCC supports the use of the SERP for the Knightsen Wetland Restoration Project. Feel free to contact us through our coordinator Elisia De Bord at 916-874-4227 or [deborde@SacCounty.gov](mailto:deborde@SacCounty.gov).

Sincerely,



Patrick Kennedy, Supervisor  
Sacramento County



Oscar Villegas, Supervisor  
Yolo County



Diane Burgis, Supervisor  
Contra Costa County



Mitch Mashburn, Supervisor  
Solano County



Tom Patti, Supervisor  
San Joaquin County

cc: Brad Henderson  
Peter McHugh