A 21ST CENTURY APPROACH

California WaterFix reflects new scientific realities and regulatory framework to protect the environment

Creating an isolated conveyance facility and additional point of diversion for water exports in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta was first proposed in the early 1950s. Efforts to build a "Peripheral Canal" lasted through 1982. State fisheries biologists supported such a canal as a way to minimize the adverse environmental effects of pumping water from the south Delta. Others sought a canal to help meet increased demand for water supplies.

Today, the California WaterFix also proposes to locate an additional diversion point in the Delta. But the scope, goals, and legal requirements of the California WaterFix are vastly different than previous efforts, including the Peripheral Canal proposal California voters rejected in 1982.

A great deal has changed in the past half century, resulting in a significantly different project than the one mid-century planners originally envisioned. State and federal governments propose a project that better balances environmental, urban, and agricultural needs in the Delta and across California.

SPECIFICATIONS, OPERATIONS, AND WATER MANAGEMENT

	PERIPHERAL CANAL (1982)	CALIFORNIA WATER FIX (2015)
CONVEYANCE	43 miles of above-ground, open channel with approximately 1,000-foot right-of-way width. Turnouts along canal to provide water releases	35 miles of gravity-based underground tunnels
CONVEYANCE TYPE	Fully isolated, with no through-Delta operations	Dual conveyance, allowing for through-Delta operations and more flexibility to maintain in-Delta water quality
CAPACITY	21,800 cfs	9,000 cfs
NUMBER OF INTAKES	1	3
NUMBER OF FISH SCREENS	1 (addressing salmon and striped bass only)	3 (state-of-the-art; advanced technology; comprehensive goal to protect more fish species)
PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR FISH SCREENS	✓	✓
POTENTIAL AGRICULTURAL LAND IMPACT	Approximately 6,600 acres	Approximately 3,550 acres
REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS	State environmental review; Federal Endangered Species Act compliance; State Water Resources Control Board change petition; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit	State and federal environmental review; Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultation; State Water Resources Control Board change petition; California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2081(B) permit; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit. For more information, see the What Happens Next Fact Sheet.
ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT	✗	✓
WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT	✗	✓

† A final decision on the proposed conveyance facility awaits the completion of regulatory and environmental review and public input consideration.

GOALS, APPROACHES, AND NEW INFORMATION

The Peripheral Canal was part of a broader package approved in 1980 by the California Legislature. California WaterFix is a multidisciplinary planning process led by state and federal agencies. A generation after the 1980 approach, the California WaterFix proposal reflects changed circumstances and new information. California WaterFix is one part of the California Water Action Plan to bolster local self-sufficiency, reduce consumption, improve water management, and reduce dependence on the Delta to meet future needs.

CALIFORNIA WATER RESOURCE PLANNING

	THEN	NOW
SURFACE STORAGE	The Legislature in 1980, by authorizing numerous surface storage facilities along with the canal, assumed a central role in local projects such as Los Vaqueros Reservoir in Contra Costa County.	Millions of acre-feet of new local and regional reservoirs and groundwater banks (more than 5 million acre-feet for Southern California alone), including Los Vaqueros Reservoir, as part of the California Water Action Plan.
ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS/ PROTECTIONS	State Water Project operators were to participate in an agreement with the California Department of Fish and Game to restore and maintain adult fish populations at historical levels.	With numerous native species endangered, the State of California, through California EcoRestore, will accelerate at least 30,000 acres of critical habitat restoration in the Delta over the next four years.
DELTA RELIANCE	Increased reliance on the Delta to meet future water needs as well as drought year needs.	The 2009 Delta Reform Act mandates reduced statewide reliance on the Delta for water supplies.
WATER CONSERVATION	No state law requiring achievement of specific water use reduction targets.	Improved water use efficiency, water conservation, and sustainable water use are mandated by 2009 legislation. The statewide goal is a 20% per capita urban water reduction by 2020.
WATER RIGHTS	Legislation had an accompanying constitutional amendment providing various protections, including a prohibition against the condemnation of water rights in the Delta.	Central Valley water rights are protected. California WaterFix does not affect the seniority and area of origin protections of Delta and upstream water rights.
SEISMIC, SEA LEVEL RISE, AND SUBSIDENCE RISK	Limited information was available about the risks to water supply from Delta earthquakes, subsidence, climate change, sea level rise and levee instability.	Decades of scientific study and evaluation has lead to the availability of more reliable information to help quantify the seismic, subsidence, climate change, sea level rise and levee instability risks to statewide water supplies.