



## Westlands Water District

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**Statement by Thomas W. Birmingham, General Manager  
Westlands Water District  
*Bay Delta Conservation Plan Announcement***

**FRESNO, CA** – Today marks an important milestone in the effort to achieve the State’s policy of improving and protecting the Delta ecosystem and creating a reliable water supply for the State. The joint announcement by Governor Edmund G. “Jerry” Brown and Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar concerning Bay Delta Conservation Plan actions that must be pursued to achieve these co-equal goals, including construction and operation of isolated conveyance facilities, charts a clear path forward to complete the BDCP process and to begin the important task of implementing the plan.

For more than six years, state and federal resource agencies, public water agencies, and numerous non-governmental organizations have spent considerable resources evaluating a full range of alternative proposals to achieve the goals and objectives set out in the BDCP’s original planning agreement; improvement and protection of the Delta ecosystem, recovery of at-risk species, restoration of water supply, and creation of a reliable water supply. The biggest risk to this effort has been a reluctance to make decisions in the face of uncertainty. But one thing is absolutely certain; the status quo is not sustainable for either at-risk species or the water supply on which tens-of-millions of people and the economy of this State rely. Today’s announcement represents important decisions about how we can and must move forward in the face of uncertainty.

It is important to note that today’s announcement does not represent final action. Numerous issues will require further analysis, and there are many details and decisions that we will have to confront. Chief among these issues is how the conveyance facilities proposed by the Governor and the Secretary will be financed and which public water agencies will pay for the facilities. Indeed, some water agencies may decide that there is insufficient benefit to justify their continued involvement in this program. But today’s announcement creates the framework in which these remaining issues can be resolved in the short term.

Westlands greatly appreciates the leadership demonstrated by Governor Brown and Secretary Salazar in reaching this point. They had to know that today’s announcement would not be well received by many interested parties, including some public water agencies that had hoped for more certainty with regard to future water supplies. But leadership involves making difficult decisions with the best information available, and Governor Brown and Secretary Salazar have met that responsibility.

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