

RESOLUTION NO. 2039
MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT OF ORANGE COUNTY
SUPPORT FOR THE CALIFORNIA WATER FIX AND CALIFORNIA ECO RESTORE

WHEREAS, the Delta, formed by the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers as they come together and flow into San Francisco Bay, is a major water hub for California's water supply system for the majority of the State, including 30% of the supplies for Southern California, and therefore underpins the overall economy of California, which stands equivalent to the 6th largest Country in the world; and,

WHEREAS, the Delta historically was a complex and dynamic natural system driven by tidal fluctuations and natural marsh flooding that has been highly altered over the last 100 years, with many of the levees and islands reclaimed from former marshlands for development or farming. The Delta was never intended to be a water conveyance facility. The scientific consensus is that the Delta is not sustainable as it exists today and that changes must be made in order to stabilize conditions; and,

WHEREAS, from a fisheries, farming and water management perspective, the Delta will continue to worsen and decline, at an ever increasing rate as sea levels rise and continuing subsidence caused by farming result in salinity intrusion, artesian conditions and levee related failures, which will become more frequent and more expensive to mitigate or repair as time passes; and,

WHEREAS, 25 million residents in California rely on water from the Delta, and local conservation efforts will not be able to replace the water that the Delta has historically supplied to Southern California even though the amount exported is only 4% of the overall Delta average annual flows; and,

WHEREAS, there is no practicable and economically efficient way to construct, heighten and reinforce the existing levees to keep pace with sea level rise or prevent the levees from collapsing during a large seismic earthquake. The consequences to the Bay Delta ecosystem, the water supply, and the California economy would be immediate, severe and negative when these events occur; and,

WHEREAS, it has been about 55 years since voter approval of the State Water Project (SWP), which was never completed as originally envisioned to include an independent conveyance facility which would allow increased capture and storage of water during periods of high flows and would also minimize conflicts with fisheries; and,

WHEREAS, as the result of federal court decisions, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service Biological Opinions, as well as other regulatory constraints to protect native species in the Delta, the SWP has not been able to collect, store, and deliver an estimated volume of 3.6 million acre-feet of water since 2008; and,

WHEREAS, although total restoration of the Delta to the conditions of the historical past is not possible, much has been learned through science studies about what is needed to improve the management and utilization of the Delta that can enhance fish, wildlife and water management for the future; and,

WHEREAS, Governor Brown's California Water Fix and California Eco Restore proposal provide a framework of how best to approach the management of the Delta's combined water and land resources in a manner that will realistically achieve improvements in both water supply reliability and ecosystem protection for the Delta as an evolving place by balancing the many competing demands; and,

WHEREAS, the California WaterFix and Eco-Restore proposal will help with water supply reliability by improving essential ecosystem functions so that populations of endangered or threatened aquatic species will be strengthened; and,

WHEREAS, the California Eco Restore will pursue more than 30,000 acres of critical Delta restoration over the next 5 years, including the improvements of habitat conditions for fisheries migration, restoring tidal and non-tidal wetland habitat for native wildlife, and improving connectivity among existing grassland and other natural habitats; and,

WHEREAS, the California Water Fix includes the construction of three intakes north of the Delta, a 35-mile 9,000 cfs underground diversion facility, and modification of Clifton Court forebay that will provide operational pumping flexibility and protect against water supply disruption due to sea-level rise, earthquakes and flood events; and,

WHEREAS, the three new intakes north of the Delta will improve existing environmental conditions in the Delta by reducing the current reverse flow conditions, minimizing the trapping of migrating fish and reducing diversions during critical fish migration periods, which will provide for more operational flexibility to enhance water deliveries, especially during wet periods; and,

WHEREAS, the California Water Fix conveyance project includes proposed operations to meet the State Water Control Board's Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan regulatory requirements for "in-Delta" water quality to protect the designated beneficial uses. The new conveyance operations would also provide water moving through the south Delta channels to reduce salinity levels; and,

WHEREAS, improving the SWP system can increase regional storage reserve levels. These storage reserves are used to protect the region from devastating effects of drought and other emergencies. The California WaterFix will help ensure that Orange County will have sufficient supplies at critical times when we need them; and,

WHEREAS, the 2016 Orange County Water Reliability Study revealed a number of important findings with implications for Orange County's water reliability, including that without new supply and system investments made by MET, MET's member agencies and Orange County, projected water shortages would be too frequent and overall reliability would not be sustainable by as early as 2030; and,

WHEREAS, Orange County should continue to support and strongly advocate for the implementation of the California Water Fix and Eco Restore proposal, as it represents the most cost-effective large-scale reliability solution to improving regional water supply reliability for Southern California and hence the reliability for Orange County. The Orange County water reliability supply analyses assumed that the California Water Fix results in "recovery" of historical supplies in the amount of approximately 440,000 acre-feet per year

on average and noted that changes in the project costs or supply development could result in changes to this recommendation; and,

WHEREAS, Orange County ratepayers have already invested millions of dollars over the years to build and maintain the State Water Project system in Northern California as well as portions of Metropolitan's regional storage, distribution, and treatment systems that take delivery of SWP supplies. Modernizing the system through the California WaterFix will help protect this investment for decades to come; and,

WHEREAS, moving forward with the California Water Fix will not be an inexpensive endeavor; however, it is the most cost-effective investment of the ratepayers' dollars to maintain and continue our economic vitality for the region. Furthermore, all of the costs for California Water Fix will be paid for exclusively by water agencies benefiting from the project; and,

WHEREAS, to do nothing in the Delta is far costlier to the businesses, residents, and economy in the State of California and Orange County than investing in the California Water Fix and California Eco Restore; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Municipal Water District of Orange County does hereby support the California Eco Restore and California Water Fix Preferred Alternative (No.4A) as described in the environmental documents with reasonable adherence to the current, public operating criteria and cost allocation principles and assumptions.

Said Resolution was adopted this 7th day of December 2016 by the following roll call vote.

AYES: Directors Barbre, Dick, Finnegan, Osborne, Tamaribuchi, Thomas &
Yoo Schneider
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

I HERBY CERTIFY the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of Resolution No.2039 adopted by the Board of Directors of Municipal Water District of Orange County at its meeting held on December 7, 2016.

Maribeth Goldsby, Secretary
Municipal Water District of Orange County