September 20, 2021

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: SB 821 (Committee on Natural Resources and Water): Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta: Delta Independent Science Board – REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Newsom:

We are writing to urge you to sign SB 821 and restore full funding for the critical work of the Delta Independent Science Board for FY 2021-22.

Two decades ago, California agencies joined federal agencies in signing the CALFED Record of Decision, which committed to a world class Delta science program. A key part of that
commitment was to establish an Independent Science Board to provide oversight and peer review of ecosystem restoration, water supply reliability, water use efficiency and conservation, water quality, and flood management in the Delta. In 2009, the legislature established the Delta Independent Science Board as a replacement for the CALFED Independent Science Board.

In this time of rapid climate change and escalating water and ecological conflicts, oversight by the Delta Independent Science Board is critically important. For the past decade the DSC contracted with the scientists on the Board at professional science rates. Recently, these contracts were abruptly terminated and were replaced with a $100 per diem. This constituted a 90% reduction in compensation. As a working board, the scientists also require staff and contract support for large reviews. Yet requests for additional support in December 2020 met with bureaucratic red tape. This crippled the Board’s essential work in FY 2020-21.

With California experiencing a megadrought, the State is in dire need of independent scientific oversight and review. As an example of the expertise and value of the Delta ISB, anticipating the need for such a study, in 2019 and early 2020, the Board began exploring “how Delta science and management might better anticipate the environmental consequences and management implications of rapid and accelerating environmental change and growing uncertainty about the future.” A comprehensive review of monitoring by state and federal agencies in the Delta is in progress, as is a review of water supply reliability.

Contracts providing full funding for the critically important work of the scientists on the Delta Independent Science Board must be secured and adequate staff support provided as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Joan Buchanan  
Former State Assemblymember

Michael Machado  
Former State Senator

Marc Del Piero, Former Attorney Member  
State Water Resources Control Board

Fran Spivvy-Weber, Former Public Member  
State Water Resources Control Board

Deirdre Des Jardins, Director  
California Water Research

David Ostrach, Science Advisor  
Allied Fishing Groups
Jim Cox, State Board President
California Striped Bass Association

John Buse, Senior Counsel
Center for Biological Diversity

Barry Boulton, President
Central Sierra Audubon Society

Carolee Krieger, President and
Executive Director
California Water Impact Network

Andria Ventura, Legislative and Policy
Director
Clean Water Action

Ron Stork, Senior Policy Advocate
Friends of the River

Cindy Charles, Conservation Chair
Golden West Women Flyfishers

Bruce Resnick
Los Angeles Waterkeeper

Regina Banks, Director
Lutheran Office of Public Policy

Frank Egger, President
North Coast Rivers Alliance
Titles of the following individual signers are for identification purposes only.

Barbara Daly, Vice Chair,
Delta Protection Advisory Committee
Owner/Operator, Delta Heartbeat Tours
Member, National Heritage Area
Management Plan Advisory Committee

Cecille Giacoma, DCA Stakeholder Engagement Committee member, Public Safety
Sherman Island, CA

Doug Hsia
Delta Cultural Preservation Representative,
Delta Protection Advisory Committee
Locke, CA

Gil Labrie, Engineer,
Reclamation Districts 1002, 554, 556, 407, 317, 2067, and Brannan-Andrus Levee Maintenance District.
Chair, Delta Citizens Municipal Advisory Council
Sacramento, CA

Gia Moreno, Town of Hood member,
DCA Stakeholder Engagement Committee
Member, National Heritage Area
Management Plan Advisory Committee
Hood, CA

Karen Mann, South Delta Business member,
DCA Stakeholder Engagement Committee
Discovery Bay, CA

James Motlow, Delta Historian
Member, National Heritage Area
Management Plan Advisory Committee
Locke, CA

Anna Swenson, Yolo County at Large member
DCA Stakeholder Engagement Committee
Clarksburg, CA

cc:
Honorable Jared Blumenfeld, Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency
Honorable Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency
Honorable Deb Haaland, Secretary of the Interior
Honorable Toni G. Atkins, Senate President pro Tempore
Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the Assembly
Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair, Senate Budget Committee
Honorable Phil Ting, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
Honorable Henry I. Stern, Chair, Senate Water & Natural Resources Committee
Honorable Eduardo Garcia, Chair, Assembly Water, Parks & Wildlife Committee
Stephen Brandt, Chair, Delta Independent Science Board
Laurel Larsen, Delta Lead Scientist
Susan Tatayon, Chair, Delta Stewardship Council
Mike Chotkowski, Science Coordinator, US Geological Survey
Tomás Torres, Director, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Pacific Southwest Region)
Paul Souza, Regional Director, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Pacific Southwest)
Barry Thom, Administrator, NOAA Fisheries (West Coast)
E. Joaquin Esquivel, Chair, State Water Resources Control Board
Karla Nemeth, Director, California Department of Water Resources
Charlton H. Bonham, Director, California Department of Fish & Wildlife
Don Nottoli, Chair, Delta Protection Commission
Campbell Ingram, Executive Officer, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
Bill Edgar, President, Central Valley Flood Protection Board
Larry Goldzband, Executive Director, San Francisco Bay Conservation & Development Commission
Hazel Miranda, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor