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Draft delta plan is bad for Northern California

Another View

By **Pauline Rocucci, Roseville mayor**

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In Placer County, the Gold Rush drove the development of local water supplies that led to California's statehood, water supplies were then used to turn the foothills into productive farms and build an economically thriving region.

While Placer County developed locally-sourced water supplies, other regions of the state developed and needed the water supplies for the vast urban and agricultural growth from sources outside their region. Southern California's demand for water has now outstripped developed supplies, putting the delicate Delta ecosystem and our water supplies at risk.

The Sacramento River watershed supplies most of the water for the entire state, much of which is through the Delta. But the Delta is overworked — fish populations have crashed and the amount of water being pumped from the Delta is reduced resulting in shortages in Southern California.

In 2009, the Legislature formed the Delta Stewardship Council and called for a new Delta Plan to balance state water supplies with a healthy Delta ecosystem. Northern California is ready to participate in a responsible Delta solution but is concerned with potential outcomes based on initial Delta Stewardship Council proposals.

The Delta Plan under development needs water to make environmental gains in the Delta and increase water supplies in the state. It is proposed that this "solution" come through imposing strict limits on water use in the north state.

Decades ago, when the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project were authorized to provide sources of water for the whole state, part of the deal was passage of area of origin statutes to assure Northern California it would always be able to use its local water. Proposed Delta solutions will undermine these basic principles upon which our local economy and quality of life have been built.

Proposed Delta solutions will also undermine regional solutions to balance water supplies and environmental needs, such as through the Water Forum Agreement which was signed in 2000. Through this agreement, our region has been making investments to protect our environment and reduce our demand on the river by developing alternative water sources.

To top it off, the draft Delta Plan proposes — in these tough times — to force our water customers to pay higher rates and fees to fund the very bureaucracy that seeks to reduce our control of local water sources.

Our region should do its part in developing water solutions for our state. But any solution that fails to honestly acknowledge the real impacts and the true beneficiaries and to uphold California's fundamental water priority is no solution at all.

Pauline Rocucci is the mayor of Roseville.

