



PRESS RELEASE

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Delta Coalition Sues City of Stockton and San Joaquin County Over Illegal Pollution Discharges

SACRAMENTO, CA – The [Coalition for a Sustainable Delta](http://www.sustainabledelta.com) today filed a lawsuit against the City of Stockton and San Joaquin County for discharging toxic chemicals and other pollutants into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The legal action, under the federal Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act, targets the city's and county's municipal storm sewer system which has repeatedly exceeded pollution and contaminant limitations.

"Today's legal action is targeted at toxic urban run-off, a known, significant and growing threat to water quality and the overall health of the declining Bay-Delta ecosystem," said Michael Boccadoro, a spokesperson for the Coalition. "Illegal storm water and other illicit toxic discharges from the City and County have significantly impacted the Delta and its ability to serve as a crucial source of drinking and irrigation water for 23 million Californians and tens of thousands of farms and businesses."

Over the past century, human activities ranging from the introduction of invasive species to urbanization have increased and collectively pose a significant and ever-greater threat to the critically important estuary. The Delta region has expanded from about 1.3 million people in 1960 to more than 3.6 million residents today. This rapid growth is having a tremendous and unchecked impact on the Delta estuary, water quality and the native species it supports. Urban storm water and municipal wastewater discharges from many sources in the Bay-Delta are widely believed to add greatly to this threat and negatively impact a growing list of endangered and threatened native fish species such as the delta smelt and Chinook salmon.

"Urban storm water discharges often contain highly toxic heavy metals, oil and other petroleum products as well as pesticides, all of which are taking a huge toll on the estuary," Boccadoro said. "It is clear that greater regulation and enforcement will be necessary to protect and sustain the Delta."

Stockton and San Joaquin County are among the worst offenders, discharging highly toxic pollutants and other contaminants directly into the Bay-Delta. The two agencies annually discharge millions of gallons of untreated storm water and have a long and well-documented history of exceeding pollution requirements under the Clean Water Act and a failure to implement adequate controls. Exceedances of specific toxic contaminants discharged by the City and County storm system have included, but are not limited to: **copper, mercury, DDT, iron, heptachlor, aldrin, diazinon, bis(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate, E. coli and fecal coliform**. The effects of these contaminants can be lethal to native fishes and other aquatic organisms critical to the food web. Other impacts on fish include decreased ability to avoid predation and impaired ability to reproduce. Growing scientific evidence also suggests that chronic exposure to toxic pollutants and synergistic effects of multiple contaminants along with other stressors, such as ammonia from wastewater discharges, are causing broad species impacts and ecosystem deterioration.

"The City and County are clearly bad actors, but their pollution problems are shared by municipal agencies throughout the Delta," Boccadoro concluded. "More needs to be done to protect our environment and economy."

Today's lawsuit is part of a comprehensive effort by the Coalition for a Sustainable Delta to highlight and address a long list of stressors that are impacting the estuary. Other issues being pursued by the Coalition include predation by non-native striped bass, the impacts of major in-delta power plant operations and the growing threat posed by municipal wastewater discharges in the region.

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For more information including a copy of the legal filing, visit www.sustainabledelta.com

The Coalition for a Sustainable Delta is an ad hoc group of water users who depend on conveyance through the delta for a large portion of their water supplies. The Coalition is dedicated to protecting the delta and is committed to promoting a strategy to ensure its sustainability.

For background information on the chemicals and contaminants referenced in this release visit the Pesticide Action Network Database at www.pesticideinfo.org