

U.S. House of Representatives  
Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Water and Power  
Honorable Grace Napolitano, Chair

Testimony provided on  
"Extinction is Not A Sustainable Water Policy: The Bay-Delta Crisis and the  
Implications for California Water Management."  
**Field Hearing, Monday, July 2, 9 a.m.**  
**Place Vallejo City Council Chambers, Vallejo, Calif.**

**By**  
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Chairman Napolitano and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to testify regarding the Bay-Delta crisis and the implications of water supply reliability. My name is Chris Martin, and I am the immediate past chair of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and the third-generation leader of AC Martin Partners, one of Southern California's oldest planning, architecture and engineering firms. We celebrated our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2005.

As a business owner, I work in a state that has a \$1.2 trillion economy, the 6<sup>th</sup> largest in the world. California's urban coastal plain represents 60 percent of that economy with Southern California generating more than \$800 billion annually. Our architectural firm has contributed to the economic vitality of the Los Angeles area and throughout the state.

The Southern California economy relies on many things, but most importantly it relies on water. That water comes to us in two ways – locally from rainfall and through imports delivered primarily by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Metropolitan derives its water supplies from two major sources – from northern California via the State Water Project and from the Colorado River.

But all of these water supplies are in peril.

Metropolitan's ability to deliver water through the Colorado River Aqueduct has been severely impacted by the lack of surplus water on the Colorado River. The Colorado River Basin is entering its eighth year of drought. We're seeing some of the driest years ever recorded on the Colorado River.

Southern California rainfall has been scarce this year. In fact, Los Angeles has experienced the driest year on record and other parts of the region are recording their lowest rainfalls ever.

Now add to this the stress being placed on Northern California water supplies that feed the State Water Project. The Sierra Nevada snow pack is 29 percent of normal, the lowest amount of snowfall we've seen in nearly 30 years.

What is comforting to people like me – as both a business owner and a resident of Southern California – is that water agencies plan for dry conditions. Metropolitan and its member agencies have developed plans, built up their reserves and have taken other measures all designed to cope with dry times.

But what is unaccounted for is the kind of current crisis we now face with the state water system. The infrastructure is not working.

The State Water Project requires conveyance of drinking water supplies to pass through the Bay Delta, where these supplies come in contact with endangered fish and pollutants.

This process not only degrades the quality of the water, but also puts the entire project in conflict. It is a conflict that frequently forces a choice between water for people and water for fish.

Right now, because of dwindling populations of the Delta smelt, state and federal courts are curtailing water deliveries under the parameters of the California and federal endangered species acts.

There are upcoming hearings in federal court over this summer as to whether future water deliveries to many parts of California should be reduced because of the Delta smelt.

These potential reductions would have dramatic impacts on the South and East Bay Area, Southern California and our Central Valley agricultural industry.

Having a judge decide how much water should be delivered in the state is akin to the scenario that faced California's prison system. In that instance, our federal courts were forced to run our prisons because the system was in disrepair.

Having a court decide when our pumps should be turned on and off is neither an effective, nor efficient way to run the state's water system.

You will recall the state's energy crisis of 2001, where California suffered massive rolling electricity blackouts.

Now, with our pumps being turned on and off and judges deciding on pumping limitations – we can expect to experience rolling water blackouts in California.

Our economy can't be subject to rolling water blackouts. Water agencies can't plan for meeting the needs of our robust economy if there are water blackouts. California's future can't be impacted by this kind of uncertainty.

We have a crisis and long-term fixes are needed. We need solutions we can rely on.

First, we need to protect the Delta. The ecosystem needs comprehensive protections. Further actions are needed to protect the Delta smelt, to restore the habitat and to make the Delta healthy again.

It is becoming increasingly clear that water exports from the Delta are just one of many factors affecting the smelt. To give the fish a chance, we must address all the issues. These include:

- Increased toxic contamination in the Delta, from sewage outflows and pesticide runoff from agriculture.
- Increased presence of invasive species throughout the Delta
- Impacts on oxygen levels in the rivers leading to the Delta because of deep channels for shipping
- Other water diversions and pumping patterns within the Delta itself.

Second, we need to fix the water supply infrastructure. We need an isolated facility that can separate drinking water supplies from the Delta. We need to protect the supplies that serve two out of every three Californians so these supplies can remain reliable to one of the world's largest and most important economies.

Finally, we need long-term planning and actions to address the impacts of global warming, specifically the potential permanent reduction in California's snow pack. This means we need to address flood control and storage.

But today, right now, the immediate need is to fix the crisis in the Delta. We need immediate action to address the ecosystem and to ensure a stable water supply for California.

California cannot survive with rolling water blackouts.