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Interior and NOAA Welcome National Academy of Sciences Report on the California Bay Delta Conservation Plan

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Deputy Secretary of the Interior David J. Hayes and NOAA Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco today issued the following statements regarding the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report on the use of science and adaptive management in California’s Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP).

“The report and recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences confirms the importance of a sound science foundation for the BDCP and provides useful guidance as the plan is further developed to meet the twin goals of restoring the California Bay-Delta ecosystem and protecting the reliability of water supplies,” said Deputy Secretary Hayes. “We are grateful for the Academy’s timely review of the BDCP interim progress report and have already made significant progress on many of the areas of concern raised by the Academy. We look forward to working with stakeholders, our federal family and the State of California to ensure that the panel’s recommendations are fully considered as the BDCP plan progresses.”

“As a science agency, NOAA greatly values the NAS input on key scientific and structural issues and we are pleased the report emphasizes the importance of foundational science to develop a successful and enduring BDCP,” said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator.

As part of its review, the NAS report cited with approval the approach to addressing scientific uncertainties undertaken by NOAA in its major biological opinion governing the operation of the system of Federal dams in the Columbia Basin. “We are gratified for the Academy’s support for our thorough and disciplined scientific approach to evaluating the strategies for rebuilding salmon runs in the Columbia Basin,” said Lubchenco. “We look forward to opportunities to share these approaches with our partners in the BDCP in order to strengthen the scientific foundations of the Bay Delta Plan.”

The BDCP is a collaborative effort by state, federal, water user and environmental partners for protecting the reliability of water supplies, restoring the California Bay-Delta ecosystem, and providing species/habitat protection.

The NAS report examined the interim progress report on the BDCP issued by the Steering Committee in November 2010. Since the November 2010 draft was released, stakeholders and consultants have been working to create or further develop many of the plan's elements, including adaptive management, plan goals and objectives, effects analysis, and overall management structure.

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