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Appeals Court Shoots Down California Water Managers' Plan to Finance Delta Tunnel.

A California appellate court dealt a setback this week to the state's Delta tunnel project, ruling that the Department of Water Resources lacks the legal authority to issue billions of dollars in bonds to dig the controversial conveyance under the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to Southern California.

In an opinion issued Wednesday, the state's 3rd District Court of Appeal said the bond plan — first approved by water managers in 2020 — was too vague and gave the department "unfettered discretion" to decide what to build and how to pay for it. The court upheld a 2024 decision by a Sacramento judge, siding with project opponents led by the Sierra Club and several capital region counties, including Sacramento.

The tunnel — officially called the Delta Conveyance Project — is a 45-mile underground pipeline that would divert water from the Sacramento River before it flows through the Delta and send it to Southern California. The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which supplies water to 19 million people around Los Angeles, is expected to fund a major share of the multibillion-dollar project.

Continue reading.

The Sacramento Bee

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