

Central Valley Business Times

Governor's revised tunnel scheme to get two public hearings

SACRAMENTO

July 7, 2015 7:21am

- Both set for end of July
- Public comment period starts Friday



The plan being pushed by the governor to build two mammoth water tunnels to drain water from the Sacramento River before it flows into the Delta will get two public hearings.

Both are set for late this month. One will be from 3:00-7:00 p.m. on July 28 at the Sacramento downtown Sheraton Hotel and the other from 3:00-7:00 p.m. on July 29 at Jean Harvie Community Center in Walnut Grove.

They are the only hearings set for the so-called "recirculated" Bay-Delta Conservation Plan Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement on the Preferred Alternative 4A.

The governor's new plan is to build the tunnels and try to fix the Delta's environment in some other plan instead of trying to combine the two efforts.

If built, the tunnels, each 40 feet in diameter, would snake 30-35 miles beneath the Delta to dump the fresh water into the State Water Project and federal Central Valley Project systems without being mixed with the Delta's more turgid waters.

No additional water would be created. Instead, those buying water from the two projects would have lower treatment costs.

But the cost of the tunnels, including interest on the money borrowed to build them, has been estimated as high as \$68 billion. Water costs would be increased to pay that bill.

Environmental groups have decried the tunnels, saying keeping fresh water out of the Delta spells doom to endangered species.

There will be a 52-day public comment period on the new scheme. It starts this Friday, July 19, with deadline to submit on Aug. 31. The new documents are expected to be posted on the BDCP website this Friday.