

Opinion: State water issues won't wait for bond

By Juliet Christian-Smith and Heather Cooley

Now that California lawmakers have pulled an \$11 billion water bond measure off the November ballot, California is facing new questions about how to fix our long-standing water problems, including the long-term health of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the future reliability of our water supply.

A number of commentators have praised or pilloried the delay of the bond, but one thing we can all agree on is that California's water challenges have not gone away. The recent state Water Resources Control Board report that finds we must halve our water withdrawals from the rivers and streams that sustain the Delta is simply one more indication that we have over-tapped California's precious water resources and that we must find innovative ways to do more with less.

The Legislature has two years to fix some of the key flaws with the current water bond, including its size, unclear definitions and unbalanced approaches. A recent Pacific Institute analysis – “The 2010 California Water Bond: What Does it Say and Do?” – offers principles for amending the current water bond to make it more effective. But it would be a serious mistake to do nothing until 2012. The good news is that there is a lot that can be done now.

Read the whole story

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