

# Opinion: Storage – Calif.'s most important water issue

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

The release last week of detailed plans for building water tunnels beneath the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta touches off a legal and political battle that could take years to resolve.

The tunnels, however, are merely one aspect of securing an adequate and dependable water supply for the state – and perhaps not even the most important aspect.

The tunnels, if built, would allow some Sacramento River water to bypass the environmentally stressed Delta on its way to the head of the California Aqueduct near Tracy.

However, a more fundamental issue is whether there will be enough water, when needed, to satisfy the 25 million Californians who draw water from the aqueduct and farmers, while enhancing the Delta's deteriorated habitat for fish and other Delta wildlife.

The state's largest reservoir, by far, is the snowpack that accumulates in the Sierra during winter months and is released into the Sacramento-San Joaquin river systems as warmer spring and summer weather melts the snow.

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