CAPITOL WEEKLY
THE NEWSPAPER OF CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

# Water: Senate OKs bonds, delta governance

By **Capitol Weekly Staff** | 11/03/09 12:00 AM PST

Two key pieces in an ambitious plan to overhaul California's troubled water-delivery system were approved late Monday in the Senate, and the remainder of the package - delayed once on the floor - faced new votes on Tuesday.

The 40-member Senate approved borrowing $9.9 billion to finance water projects, pending the approval of voters. The house also approved a hard-fought proposal to dramatically change the way the heart of the state's water system, the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, is governed and developed. The plan includes a new, seven-member council - four members would be gubernatorial appointees - to decide delta water policy.

The actions followed months of negotiations between an array of interests that have roiled California's water politics for years - farmers, environmentalists, organized labor, builders, public water agencies, fiscal conservatives, delta activists and more.
The bills do not contain authorization for a Peripheral Canal or for new reservoirs - two issues that have drawn intense fire from environmentalists, who believe the state should be focusing more on conservation and groundwater storage.

But major supporters of the bills, including the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the Westlands Water District in the Central Valley, both believe the legislation will help pave the way for the canal.

One version of the proposed canal would take water from the Sacramento River near Hood and send it along the edge of the delta toward the California Aqueduct. The goal of the canal is to get water into the aqueduct and move it southward without pumping it directly from the delta. Traditionally, the huge pumps have drawn water from the delta, disturbing wildlife and degrading the fragile delta habitat.

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