

# Calif. Adds 'Delta Tunnel' to List of Possible Water Supply Solutions

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**SAN FRANCISCO** -- California officials are studying whether a 35-mile tunnel under the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta might help solve some of the state's water supply problems.

Teresa Engstrom, chief of the delta engineering branch at the California Department of Water Resources, confirmed that the agency is conducting feasibility studies on an "all tunnel" option that would route water under the Bay Delta from rivers and reservoirs to the north of Sacramento to farms in the south.

The idea to build a tunnel sprang from a handful of public workshops the department held recently on how to approach California's long-running fight over water rights in the northern part of the state. A tunnel, she said, could theoretically offer a way out of the vexing maze of water supply, endangered species and farming issues facing the state.

"We had a lot of comments that said, 'Why don't you go under?'" Engstrom said. "So we thought we would take a look."

Engstrom stressed that the all-tunnel option has no more weight at this point than competing ideas to build a canal around the delta or new levees along the water's current route through the middle of the delta region. All are under consideration.

DWR engineers conducting environmental and geotechnical studies expect to have a draft environmental report completed by the end of the year on all three proposals, Engstrom said. A final public draft would then be ready next year.

The new wrinkle comes as lawmakers, farmers, commercial fishers and

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