

# Gov. Brown Appoints Water Lobbyist to California Department of Water Resources

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The revolving door between corporate interests, water contractors and state government swung open once again on Wednesday, September 18 when Governor Jerry Brown appointed Laura King Moon of Woodland, a lobbyist for the state's water exporters, as chief deputy director of the California Department of Water Resources (DWR).

Moon has been a project manager for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan since 2011 while "on loan" from the State Water Contractors, a non-profit association of 27 public agencies from Northern, Central and Southern California that purchase water under contract from the California State Water Project.

"This appointment is just more of the fox guarding the hen house," said Tom Stokely, Water Policy Analyst for the California Water Impact Network (C-WIN). "We know whose interests she will represent – and it's not the taxpayers of California."

"This is just more of the same from the Brown administration, the Natural Resources Agency and DWR," responded Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla, Executive Director of Restore the Delta. "There is a revolving door of water insiders whose political agenda has nothing to do with protecting water, our state's most important resource."

The Department of Water Resources in 2011 hired Moon, the Assistant General Manager of the State Water Contractors from 2000 to 2011, to assist in the completion of the **controversial** Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) to build the twin tunnels.

In a letter to Assemblymember Jared Huffman on October 13, 2011, Natural Resources Secretary John Laird attempted to explain the status of King Moon, whose hiring by DWR drew fierce criticism from Delta residents, fishermen, grassroots environmentalists and advocates of openness and transparency in government.

"Ms. Moon is working for the California Department of Water Resources, serving on loan from the State Water Contractors until the completion of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan," said Laird. "She is responsible to and represents DWR solely, and is subject to all DWR rules, protocols and confidentiality agreements."

Before going to work for the State Water Contractors, Moon was director of strategic planning at the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority from 1997 to 1999, according to a statement from the Governor's Office.

She was special assistant to the regional director at the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation from 1996 to 1997 and an environmental affairs officer at the East Bay Municipal Water District from 1994 to 1995. Moon was senior staff scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council from 1977 to 1994. She earned a Master of Science degree in energy and resources from the University of California, Berkeley.

This position does not require Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$161,676. Moon is a Democrat.

The Governor's appointment of Laura King Moon as chief deputy director for DWR is just one of many examples of the conflicts of interest and corruption that define California water and environmental politics.

Just a few of the many examples of the revolving door between corporations and state government include:

The resignation of State Senator Michael J. Rubio in February, 2013 to go work in a "government affairs" position for Chevron. Rubio, who was **leading the charge** to weaken the landmark California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and make it more friendly to corporations, claimed he resigned in order to spend more time with his family.

DWR's hiring of Susan Ramos "on loan" from the Westlands Water District, the "Darth Vader" of **California water politics**, to serve as "a liaison between all relevant parties" surrounding the Delta Habitat Conservation and Conveyance Program (DHCCP) and provide "technical and strategic assistance" to DWR.

Documents obtained by this reporter under the California Public Records Act revealed that Ramos, Deputy General Manager of the Westlands Water District, was hired in an "inter-jurisdictional personal exchange agreement" between the Department of Water Resources and Westlands Water District from November 15, 2009 through December 31, 2010. The contract was extended to run through December 31, 2011 and again to continue through December 31, 2012.

The hijacking of "marine protection" in California by Catherine Reheis-Boyd, President of the Western States Petroleum Association (WSPA). Reheis-Boyd **chaired** the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative Blue Ribbon Task Force to create alleged "marine protected areas" in Southern California and served on the task forces for the Central Coast, North Central Coast and North Coast.

The failure of Katherine Hart Johns, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board member, to **report** her husband's separate property interest in his lobbying firm, California Resource Strategies, Inc., on her 2006, 2007, and 2008 annual Statements of Economic Interests. The California Fair Political Practices Commission fined Hart Johns only \$600 for this overt conflict of interest, in a classic example of how violators of state ethics and environmental laws often get off with a mere "slap on the wrist." King Moon's appointment takes place as the Brown administration is fast-tracking the \$54.1 billion Bay Delta Conservation Plan to build twin tunnels to export water to corporate agribusiness interests irrigating drainage-impaired land on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. The peripheral tunnels under the Delta will hasten the extinction of Central Valley Chinook salmon and steelhead, Delta smelt, longfin smelt, green sturgeon and fish species, as well as pose an enormous threat to salmon and steelhead populations on the Trinity and Klamath rivers.

Nobody sums up the threat that the peripheral canal or tunnels present to the state better than Caleen Sisk, Chief of the Winnemem Wintu Tribe.

"The common people will pay for the canal, and a few people will make millions," **said** Sisk. "It will turn a once pristine water way into a sewer pipe. It will be all bad for the fish, the ocean and the people of California."