NAS BDCP Report Talking Points 5-4-2011

- The Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) is a collaborative effort by state, federal, water user and environmental partners for restoring the California Bay-Delta ecosystem, protecting the reliability of water supplies, and providing species/habitat protection.

- We are grateful to National Academy of Sciences and the National Research Council for completing a timely of review the use of science and adaptive management as reflected in the interim progress report on the BDCP issued by the Steering Committee in November 2010. We greatly value the NAS panel's input on key scientific and structural issues, and we will work with other stakeholders to ensure that the panel's recommendations are fully considered and appropriately responded to as the plan is further developed. (N.B.: This report was done by a special BDCP "panel"; the other two NAS reports are being prepared by a Bay-Delta "committee" that is comprised of most of the same people who are on the panel.)

- The report confirms the importance of a sound basis in science for the plan, and provides useful guidance to achieve this end.

- The panel has found the November 2010 document to be incomplete and unclear in a variety of ways and places, and has provided recommendations to address these identified deficiencies. Since the Steering Committee's November 2010 draft was released, stakeholders and consultants have been working to create or further develop many of the plan elements that the panel focused on, such as adaptive management, plan goals and objectives, the effects analysis, and overall management structure.

- The panel noted the absence in the documents it reviewed of an effects analysis, a principal component of the plan. The effects analysis has progressed considerably in the past several months, and its further development will be informed by the panel's comments. State and Federal agencies are also making progress on other areas of concern raised by the panel, including the project description, goals and objectives, and adaptive management.

- The panel report confirms that the scientific building blocks exist for development of a successful BDCP. The Departments agree wholeheartedly with the NRC that a BDCP "that effectively integrates and utilizes science could indeed pave the way toward the next generation of solutions to California's chronic water problems." (p. 6, p. 44)

- This report is a component of a two-year NAS expert committee effort that was begun at the request of Congress and the Departments of Commerce and Interior. The committee issued its first report, on the scientific questions, assumptions, and

conclusions underlying the biological opinions controlling water project operations, in March 2010. The committee is scheduled to issue its final report in late 2011. That report will address how to most effectively incorporate science and adaptive management concepts into holistic programs for management and restoration of the Bay-Delta.

- Federal and state agencies will continue the environmental compliance process and document development (EIS/EIR) and identify an initial list of project alternatives to be considered and analyzed. The public draft of the BDCP and draft EIR/EIS are targeted for release in the first part of 2012.

- The timing of the panel's report will allow its recommendations to guide the plan participants as the ongoing process of plan development proceeds. We look forward continuing the vital, collaborative work of the BDCP.