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Aaron Sankin

aaron.sankin@huffingtonpost.com

Jerry Brown: 'I Just Want To Get Sh*t Done' (PHOTOS)

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It's true, he does.

"I just want to get sh*t done," said always quotable California Governor Jerry Brown earlier this week.

Brown was discussing his recently announced plan to build two controversial tunnels that would distribute water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta down to the increasingly thirsty (and perpetually arid) southern portion of the state.

"At this stage as I see many of my friends dying... I want to get sh*t done," he told reporters. "I want to get this thing done the best I can. You give me your analysis, I'll read it, but we're going to make stuff happen and that's why I'm here. We're going to take into account the opposition, but we're not going to sit here and twiddle our thumbs and stare at our navel. We're going to make decisions and get it done. If we have to fight initiatives or referendums we'll fight those too. But somehow before I'm ready to turn in my payroll card I expect to get some very important things done and this

is one of them."

(SCROLL DOWN FOR PHOTOS)

If Brown seems frustrated with criticisms of his \$23 billion plan, it's because the creation of something similar to the proposed water tunnels has been one of his top priorities for California since his first term as governor over three decades ago.

Figuring out how to adequately hydrate a state that's largely dry and has a perpetual tension between the densely-populated urban centers along the coast and the largely agricultural central valley is no easy task.

In the early 1980s, Brown pushed an idea called the "peripheral canal," a structure that would divert water from the delta into a series of pumping stations and then send it down to Southern California.

A signature drive got the measure placed on the June 1982 ballot, but it was defeated by a nearly two to one margin. The northern half of the state overwhelmingly disapproved, fearing that pushing such a large quantity of water so far south would leave them high and dry in drought years.

Capitol Weekly reports:

The delta, a confluence of rivers, is a fragile, farm-rich, marshy, slough-laced landscape crisscrossed by aging 19th century levees. Taking large amounts of water directly from the delta has harmed wildlife, so the dream of engineers and water contractors has been to devise a method of transferring northern water from above the delta southward without endangering the environment. In the latest plan, the twin pipes will carry water, gravity fed, to the southbound aqueducts and channels near Tracy—including the 700-mile-long California aqueduct—and thence to the water wholesalers, who are picking up the bulk of the tab of the project.

The divide on Brown's new plan to create a system capable of [diverting 67,500 gallons of water](#) per second sparks both environmental and political concerns.

Many California residents worry that the deal serves primarily to enrich the private water wholesalers while doing irreparable damage to the delta ecosystem.

"The delta is in a biological meltdown," Bill James of the Restore the Delta explained to the Associated Press. "This plan is not a path to restoration; it's a death sentence for one of the [world's greatest estuaries](#)."

Restore the Delta, a coalition of farmers and environmental groups opposing the plan, argues that the tunnels could degrade water quality, forcing farmers to irrigate their crops with toxins.

Since a full report on the impacts of the tunnels has yet to be completed, both farmers and environmental activists remain wary.

That isn't to imply that state's current system is ideal for either group. At present, the pumping station in use now is harmful to the endangered delta smelt. Legal battles between environmental advocates, who want to curtail water deliveries from the station to protect the

threatened species, and farming groups, which insist on keeping the spigot open, have led to a significant level of intra-state acrimony.

The tunnels' backers claim that the new system could deliver the necessary water while not only protecting the delta's marine life but also carrying out 100,000 acres of floodplain and tidal marsh restoration.

Check out this slideshow of aerial shots of the Sacramento Delta region courtesy of [Adrian Mendoza Photography](#):