

Interdisciplinary Initiative  
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## **CASE**

*California Delta: Rich in Resources, Lacking in Champions*

**THE REALITY:** The California Delta is a community rich in natural resources, agricultural abundance, and history and culture. However, this precious asset is not uniform in its composition, nor is it governed by a single or even a federated governance structure. The Delta constitutes six counties that cross into the San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento Region, and San Joaquin Valley and several overlapping political and jurisdictional boundaries. It features the primary Delta and the more developed and urbanized secondary Delta. Collectively, this makes decision-making challenging and tracking progress even more difficult.

**THE CONSEQUENCE:** The Delta is a current and potential source for two of the state's most hotly contested resources: water and land for housing. These compete for priority with preservation of natural and working lands. Certainly, there are a number of special interests for each of these priority areas. Without centralized data and governance, it is challenging to formulate a strategy for this unique geography. A forthcoming report by the Center for Regional Change, (completed in partnership with the Delta Protection Commission), seeks to identify socioeconomic indicators to provide a quantitative snapshot for benchmarking policy progress in the Delta.

**IN SUMMARY:** The Delta is a source of historic, economic, cultural, natural, and agricultural resources. The Socioeconomic Indicators Report by the Center for Regional Change offers a curated list of indicators to identify and monitor overall quality of life and policy benchmarks.

**RECOMMENDED:** Consider how disparate interests groups and political jurisdictions gather information and make decisions on priorities and strategies for the Delta.

## **DISCUSSION**

1. Agriculture and tourism are the primary backbones of the Delta's economy. These industries also place a high burden on rural roads and can result in cyclical employment patterns that are vulnerable to economic shocks and environmental changes, (such as recession and drought). How do we support existing industries in economic resilience?
2. Development in the more urban secondary zone of the Delta, (which includes parts of Contra Costa County in the San Francisco Bay Area), offers relatively affordable land with high quality amenities. How do we balance demands for housing with other land uses, such as agricultural and working lands?