

to permitting and record-keeping policy will speed up the construction of new homes, along with everything else.

Will the plan harm the environment?

Not if you ask the governor, it goes without saying.

"I care deeply about what the environmental community believes and thinks, but at the same time I care deeply about the progress we're promoting here today," he said today.

Newsom had some backing from at least one major green group: Environment California, a nonprofit that often stakes out a centrist position on climate-related policy.

"We need to work harder, better, faster, stronger to build five times as much clean energy every year," the group's director Laura Deehan said at today's press conference.

But it's not clear whether the state's broader environmental community will be as enthused.

In a statement, Sierra Club California director Brandon Dawson said that the group is still reviewing the idea, but expressed serious reservations. "We acknowledge the governor's desire to promote clean infrastructure, but this proposal needs a lot of work," he said.

Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla, the executive director of the group Restore the Delta, lashed out at the governor following the release of the order.

"We have never been more disappointed in a California governor than we are with Gov. Newsom," she said in a statement.

What are the odds this goes anywhere?

It's too early to tell.

The governor's office released bill language late Friday afternoon and lawmakers in general have yet to read the details.

Senate leader Toni Atkins in a written statement said climate change demands the state "move faster to build and strengthen critical infrastructure," but noted only that she looks "forward to working with our colleagues in the Assembly and administration to ensure we can do so responsibly."

Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon in a written statement similarly said he would "work with our partners in the Senate as well as the governor to craft responsible proposals to meet California's infrastructure needs."

Newsom can at least count on the support of the Legislature's Republicans.

"California Senate Republicans have been advocating for CEQA reform for years," GOP Leader Sen. Brian Jones from Santee, said in a statement. "We are thrilled that Gov. Newsom is finally taking action."

The current law has its defenders. Chief among them are environmentalists and environmental justice advocates who see it as a vital tool to check unfettered development and pollution.

Also among CEQA's supporters: neighborhood groups who often use the law to stymie big, noisy projects in their backyard and organized labor groups, who have found it to be a useful way to block projects in order to extract union-friendly concessions.

Newsom appears to have at least part of that latter group in his camp. At today's press conference, the governor was flanked by hard-hat wearing carpenters, laborers and electricians. Among the biggest applause lines: The projection, unverified, that this proposal will lead to the creation of 400,000 new jobs. □

A 2019 aerial photo of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta taken near Brentwood, looking north along Old River. PHOTO COURTESY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES



PatioPros
Patio Covers • Outdoor Living

LICENSE #1066922

530-924-6400 | www.patiopropros.com



Fight The Bite!

- AVOID DAWN AND DUSK
- DRAIN STANDING WATER
- WEAR REPELLENT

ButteMosquito.com

