Walnut Grove 4/10/96

I am Steven Mello, I own part of a family owned corporation that owns and leases ground in the Delta on Tyler Island and on district 1002. We farm about 2400 acres. I am a trustee of R.D. 563, Tyler Island. I am a commissioner on the Delta Protection Commission representing reclamation districts. And I am a member of the board of directors of the North Delta Conservancy, a 501-3C non-profit land trust.

I only today received the workshop information packet containing the 10 draft alternatives of the Cal-Fed Bay Delta Program. As I have not had time to read this document, think about it, discuss it with my peers and formulate a response, I formally request that there be another public hearing scheduled for a later date at this site.

I do have some comments to offer regarding the effects to the Delta community by some aspects of these alternatives.

- The purchase of privately owned land by state or federal government and its retirement from the tax bases of the special districts such as fire protection, reclamation districts, school districts and others that provide the services we Delta residents rely upon would put a great burden on the remaining tax payers in order to provide

the funding neccesary to provide the same level of services.

• The retirement of agricultural ground from production would erode the economic base required by our farm support industry as well as other businesses that rely in part on business generated by farm support personnel and farm workers. The loss of portions of our farm support industry would drive the cost of doing business up for the farming industry.

• The screening of in Delta water diversions (pumps & siphons) would be costly. Those costs should not be paid for by in Delta users. If screens are installed, there should be some way to bypass them if they plug up ~~and~~ rendering the siphon or pump inoperable. Crop losses caused by non-operation of diversion facilities can be immediate and costly. Farmers should be reimbursed for these losses if they occur.

• Taking water around the Delta has the potential to devalue Delta lands by putting into question our riparian and contractual water rights. It also may detract from the quantity and quality of water currently available to us.

• It appears that the shaded riverine aquatic habitat is being created precisely where biologists are trying to keep anadromous fish away from.

- If water side berms are to be created, dredge spoils from river channels adjacent to the proposed berms should be used, so as not to reduce channel capacity, exaserbating seepage and flood problems by raising water surface elevations.

Upon further review of the information packet, I am sure I will have further, more specific comments on each of the proposals.

I hope that you can find a way to accomodate the water needs of the state, while not destroying the Delta as we know it.

Thank You
Steven Mello

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