



**CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM**

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The Resources Agency

September 3, 1996



of California

The Honorable Pete Wilson
Governor, State of California
Office of the Governor
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814



The Honorable Bruce Babbitt
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
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Washington, DC 20240



Cal/EPA

Gentlemen:

**CALFED AGENCIES CONCLUDE PHASE I:
IDENTIFICATION OF APPROPRIATE RANGE OF SOLUTION
ALTERNATIVES**

Two years ago representatives of the undersigned Federal and State agencies committed to work cooperatively to develop a long-term solution to the problems affecting the San Francisco Bay-Sacramento/San Joaquin River Bay-Delta system. In the spring of 1995, the agencies established the CALFED Bay-Delta Program as the comprehensive, long-term planning effort to address the resource problems of the Delta. The objective of this cooperative effort is to identify solutions to problems of ecosystem quality, water supply reliability, water quality, and vulnerability of Delta levees and channels to natural disasters. Through the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, the State and Federal agencies have now completed the first of a three-phase process by identifying a reasonable range of alternatives to undergo detailed analysis in the environmental review processes of Phases II and III.

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program developed by the Federal and State agencies fully acknowledged that the eventual success of the effort to develop a lasting solution for the Bay-Delta system depended upon the full and equal involvement of all interested parties in a collaborative process. The process was designed to make full use of existing information and documents that were the products of previous State, Federal and stakeholder efforts. In addition, the agencies have designed the process to



CALFED Agencies

California

The Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Water Resources
California Environmental Protection Agency
State Water Resources Control Board

Federal

Environmental Protection Agency
Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Reclamation
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service

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develop a Bay-Delta solution so as to address fundamental problems of the system in a comprehensive manner, and to address problems and objectives that were most important to the vitality of the Bay-Delta ecosystem. Finally, the agencies intend the process to result in solutions of manageable scope that will be implementable.

The agencies designed the Phase I process to identify alternatives intended to improve the Bay-Delta ecosystem. The extent and magnitude of improvement will be identified in Phase II. The process provided for equal involvement among all interest groups, open communication and innovative thinking, and fostered consensus and cooperation. Finally, the process incorporated much of the existing information already available and combined different actions to provide integrated solutions which ultimately will ensure the health and productivity of the Bay-Delta ecosystem.

Phase II will include alternative refinement, preparation of a Programmatic environmental impact report and statement (EIR/EIS), and development of implementation strategies. The Draft Programmatic EIR/EIS is to be released by Fall 1997 with a Final Programmatic EIR/EIS to be released by Fall 1998. Phase III will include project-level environmental review and subsequent implementation.

Phase I consisted of a step-by-step development program. Each step was based upon the work of the staff and management of the CALFED agencies, input from the public workshops and meetings, involvement of the Bay-Delta Advisory Council, suggestions from many interest groups, and a variety of other public involvement efforts. The Phase I steps included:

- Step 1.** Defining the problem for the four resource components - ecosystem quality, water quality, water supply and levee and channel vulnerability;
- Step 2.** Developing preliminary objectives, mission and scope;
- Step 3.** Identifying potential actions which could become part of the alternatives;
- Step 4.** Crafting solution strategies which ensure that problems are addressed in each of the four resource areas in an equitable, comprehensive and linked manner;
- Step 5.** Identifying preliminary alternatives; and
- Step 6.** Refining alternatives.

This process culminated in development of three preliminary alternatives that will be refined through Phase II and analyzed in a Programmatic EIR/EIS. As a result of the Phase I process,

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each alternative consists of variable components related to water storage and Delta conveyance. Each alternative also contains common programs related to water use efficiency, water quality, system vulnerability, and ecosystem quality. The common programs will vary by alternative, but are intended to achieve the same goals. Each alternative is fully set forth in the CALFED Bay-Delta Program's Phase I Completion Report. A summary of the alternatives follows:

No project/No action alternative.

Alternative 1. This alternative includes common programs for extensive levels of water use efficiency, water quality improvements, levee and channel system integrity, and ecosystem restoration. The system conveyance component will use the existing system and channel configuration with limited or no modifications to that system. This alternative will also include a storage component in which a range of storage variables will be designed to complement the other components. The range of storage options to be considered include everything from no additional storage to some combination of North of Delta, South of Delta, and/or in-Delta surface storage, as well as conjunctive use/groundwater banking.

Alternative 2. This alternative includes common programs for extensive levels of water use efficiency, water quality improvements, levee and channel system integrity, and ecosystem restoration. The system conveyance component will include a variety of modifications to Delta channels in order to increase the conveyance efficiency. This conveyance component is referred to as a through-Delta system. This alternative will also include a storage component in which a range of storage variables will be designed to complement the other components. The range of storage options to be considered include everything from no additional storage to some combination of North of Delta, South of Delta, and/or in-Delta surface storage, as well as conjunctive use/groundwater banking.

Alternative 3. This alternative includes common programs for extensive levels of water use efficiency measures, water quality improvements, levee and channel system integrity, and ecosystem restoration. The system conveyance component will include a combination of improved through-Delta conveyance and conveyance isolated from Delta channels. This alternative is referred to as a dual system. In addition, a fully isolated facility with no through-Delta conveyance component will be analyzed as part of this alternative. This alternative will also include a storage component in which a range of storage variables will be designed to complement the other components. The range of storage options to be considered include everything from no additional storage to some combination of North of Delta, South of Delta, and/or in-Delta surface storage, as well as conjunctive use/groundwater banking.

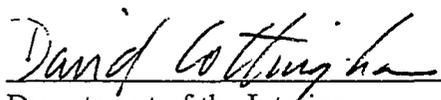
The CALFED agencies believe that the Phase I process guided the identification of a reasonable range of solution alternatives which, together with a no action/no project alternative, will now undergo further detailed analysis and environmental review during the following

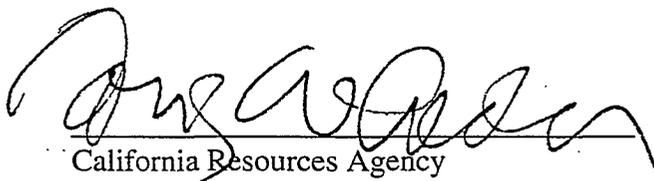
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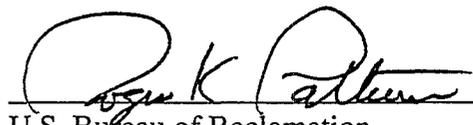
Program phases. The Phase II process will include refinement of the alternative components, development of strategies for implementing the alternatives; and, preparation of a joint Programmatic EIR/EIS to identify impacts and mitigation associated with various alternatives. The primary purpose of the Programmatic EIR/EIS is to inform decision-makers and the public on the impacts alternatives could have on both the human and the natural environment and to evaluate how well alternatives meet the project purposes. This evaluation will include a thorough discussion of the interrelated and cumulative consequences of the alternatives.

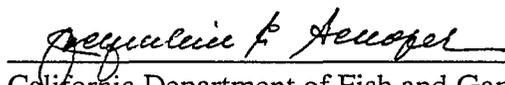
The mission of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program is to develop a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system. The undersigned agencies affirm their commitment to the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, completing a Programmatic EIR/EIS, and working cooperatively to solve the problems of the Bay-Delta system.

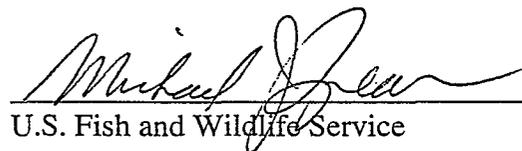
Signed:


Department of the Interior


California Resources Agency

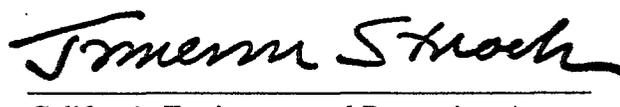

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

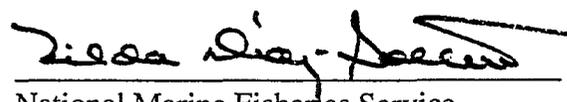

California Department of Fish and Game


U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service


California Department of Water Resources


U.S. Environmental Protection Agency


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National Marine Fisheries Service


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