

Operational and Regulatory Modeling Assumptions for the Affected Environment and No Action Alternative

Introduction

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program (CALFED) has worked with agencies, stakeholders, and the public to develop information that will be used in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS). This summary report documents the process and results of CALFED's efforts to develop information on the **operational and regulatory modeling assumptions** for the Affected Environment and the No Action Alternative. CALFED believes that a substantial amount of this important effort is completed, but recognizes that, as the process moves forward, additional efforts may be required or additional issues may arise that will require resolution. As they develop, these issues will be brought to the attention of CALFED agencies, stakeholders, other agencies, and the public.

CALFED has undertaken an intensive process to develop **operational and regulatory modeling assumptions** for the Affected Environment and the No Action Alternative. As part of this effort, meetings were held and various materials were prepared and distributed to key agencies, stakeholders, and the public for review and comment. The following list provides a summary of these meetings and materials:

- March 27, 1996: proposed approach for preparing affected environment/existing conditions description;
- May 20, 1996: discussion paper outlining CALFED's proposed approach to developing the No Action Alternative and identifying projects for the cumulative impact analysis;
- July 1, 1996: workshop packet describing proposed affected environment/existing conditions resource categories and time periods to be covered in describing the affected environment, projects in the No Action Alternative and cumulative impact analysis, and proposed operational criteria;
- July 11, 1996: workshop presenting the information in the July 1, 1996 workshop packet;
- September 27, 1996: transmittal and report dated September 18, 1996 presenting the detailed results of the No Action Alternative screening effort, adjustments to affected environment resource categories and time periods, and

responses to written and oral comments received in response to the July 1, 1996 workshop packet and July 11, 1996 workshop;

September 27, 1996:

first workgroup meeting to discuss operational and regulatory assumptions for affected environment and the No Action Alternative;

October 1, 1996:

release of draft affected environment reports describing Delta resources to CALFED agencies for review;

October 11, 1996:

second workgroup meeting to discuss operational and regulatory assumptions for affected environment and the No Action Alternative;

November 15, 1996:

third workgroup meeting to discuss operational and regulatory assumptions for affected environment and the No Action Alternative;

January 22, 1997:

transmittal and report dated December 30, 1996 summarizing results of the September 27 to November 15, 1996 meetings, and a second report dated December 31, 1996 responding to comments received on the September 18, 1996 report;

March 17, 1997: presentation to CALFED Management Team on significant issues which arose during development of Affected Environment, No Action Alternative and Cumulative Impact Analysis; and

April 14, 1997: presentation to ClubFed members at Federal agency retreat.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that an EIR describe the environment in the vicinity of the project, from both local and regional perspectives, as it exists before commencement of the project. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that an EIS describe the area to be affected by the alternatives under consideration. For the CALFED Programmatic EIR/EIS, the Affected Environment will be a description of the existing physical, biological, economic, and social conditions and existing operational and regulatory criteria. **The description of existing physical, biological, economic, and social conditions was provided in our May 20, 1997 memo to the CALFED Policy Group.**

Both CEQA and NEPA also require that an EIR or EIS examine alternative ways of accomplishing the objectives of a proposed project. Both Acts also require an examination of a no-project or No Action alternative. The No Action Alternative is intended to disclose to the public and decision makers what would happen if the proposed action was not implemented. The No Action Alternative would include physical features and operational and regulatory criteria

currently in place as well as those potential future physical features or operational and regulatory criteria which meet screening criteria. **The description of existing and potential future physical features was provided in our May 20, 1997 memo to the CALFED Policy Group.**

CEQA and NEPA also require an evaluation of the cumulative impacts of an action. Cumulative impacts are defined by CEQA and NEPA as incremental impacts on the environment that result from the proposed action in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. CALFED has developed information that will form the basis of the cumulative impact analysis. **The description of features that will form the basis of the cumulative impact analysis was provided in our May 20, 1997 memo to the CALFED Policy Group.**

The following sections focus on operational and regulatory criteria for the Affected Environment and No Action Alternative.

Operational and Regulatory Assumptions for the Affected Environment

Defining the affected environment (sometimes referred to as existing conditions) is important in the preparation of the Programmatic EIR/EIS because, as described in the Introduction, this information will describe the environment in the vicinity of the project as it exists before commencement of the project and it will form one of the "baselines" against which the impacts of the No Action Alternative and the action alternatives will be compared.

Describing the Affected Environment for the Programmatic EIR/EIS requires development of operational and regulatory assumptions for use in DWRSIM modeling.

During the course of developing the assumptions for the DWRSIM modeling, non-modeling assumptions were suggested by meeting participants.

Appendix A provides a description of the modeling assumptions for the Affected Environment. Appendix B provides a description about non-modeling assumptions for the Affected Environment.

Operational and Regulatory Assumptions for the No Action Alternative

Defining the No Action Alternative is important in the preparation of the Programmatic EIR/EIS because, as described in the Introduction, this information will be used to describe the environment in the vicinity of the project as it would exist in the future and it will form one of the "baselines" against which the impacts of the action alternatives will be compared.

Describing the No Action Alternative for the Programmatic EIR/EIS requires development of operational and regulatory assumptions for use in DWRSIM modeling.

During the course of developing the assumptions for the DWRSIM modeling, non-modeling assumptions were suggested by meeting participants. Additionally, there were discussions about implications to the CALFED Program resulting from potential flow changes in the Trinity and American Rivers. The CALFED Program is considering conducting sensitivity analysis to assess the effects of the potential flow regimes.

Appendix C provides a description of the modeling assumptions for the No Action Alternative. Appendix D provides a description about non-modeling assumptions for the No Action Alternative.