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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PUBLIC HEARING ADDRESSES WATER ISSUES**

SACRAMENTO -- The CALFED Bay-Delta Program will hold a public hearing in Fresno, Wednesday, April 22, at the Ramada Inn, 324 E. Shaw Avenue. There will be an informal question and answer period from 6 to 7 p.m. The formal hearing will begin at 7 p.m. Area residents are encouraged to come and provide input on three potential solutions to environmental and water management problems associated with the Bay-Delta system.

There will be another Central Valley public hearing in Bakersfield on April 29 at the Kern Agricultural Pavillion.

“Communities in the Central Valley have a big stake in the Bay-Delta system,” said Lester Snow, executive director of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. “Farming and urban communities depend on a reliable, affordable and high quality water supply for their livelihoods. That’s why it’s so critical they be involved in the decision-making process.”

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is a cooperative effort among state and federal agencies and California’s environmental, urban and agricultural communities. It was initiated in 1995 by Governor Pete Wilson and the Clinton Administration to address environmental and water management problems associated with the Bay-Delta system, an intricate web of waterways created at the junction of the San Francisco Bay and the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and the watershed that feeds them.

For the past several decades, the Bay-Delta system has struggled to meet the competing demands of the environment and water users, while maintaining good water quality and a levee

**CALFED Agencies**

<b>California</b>	The Resources Agency Department of Fish and Game Department of Water Resources California Environmental Protection Agency State Water Resources Control Board	<b>Federal</b>	Environmental Protection Agency Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service Bureau of Reclamation U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Department of Commerce National Marine Fisheries Service
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system that protects local towns and infrastructure from flooding and contaminating the state's water supply. Today the system is not adequately meeting any of these needs.

On March 16, the CALFED Bay-Delta Program released a draft programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) identifying three potential solutions. All three alternatives were evaluated by technical staff and public working committees against such criteria as benefits to water quality, impact on fish and wildlife, total cost and operational flexibility. Seventeen public hearing will be held throughout the state to provide multiple opportunities for Californians to weigh in on the trade-offs associated with developing a comprehensive solution to the problems of the Bay-Delta system.

The Bay-Delta is a critically important part of California's natural environment and economy, supplying drinking water for more than 22 million Californians, and irrigation water for more than four million acres of the world's most productive farmland. It also supports 750 fish and wildlife species; some found nowhere else on the planet.

Each of the three alternatives for a Bay-Delta solution contain major programs to address water use efficiency, ecosystem restoration, watershed management, levee system integrity, water transfers and water quality. The alternatives differ primarily in how they would move and store water in the system. Alternative 1, the Existing System Conveyance Alternative, would consider storage and make small improvements to the channel configurations of the Delta. Alternative 2, the Modified Through Delta Conveyance Alternative, includes additional storage and would make significant improvements to the channels in the Delta. Alternative 3, the Dual Delta Conveyance Alternative, is similar to Alternative 2, except it also adds a new channel around the east side of the Delta. The solutions range in cost from \$9 to \$10.5 billion over a period of 25 to 30 years.

Public input is critical to the development of an equitable and feasible solution. In addition to giving oral comments at a public hearing, interested individuals may send written comments to the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, 1416 9<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 1155, Sacramento, CA 95814. The public comment period ends June 1, 1998. An executive summary of the draft programmatic EIS/EIR and the Phase II Interim Report, which contains information on key issues to be resolved prior to the selection of a preferred alternative, are available on the CALFED website, <http://calfed.ca.gov>. These documents are also available, along with the

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complete EIS/EIR and its appendices, at libraries throughout California and by calling 1-800-900-3587.

For further information about the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, please call 1-800-700-5752 or visit its website, <http://calfed.ca.gov>.

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