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FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT
REPRESENTING THE COUNTIES OF
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California State Senate

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K. MAURICE JOHANNESSEN
FOURTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT

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WILDLIFE
VETERANS AFFAIRS,
CHAIR



March 31, 1998

Mr. Lester Snow
Executive Director, CalFed Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Lester:

I received a letter from an editor of a Northern California newspaper dated Friday, March 27, in regard to her dealings with CalFed, when making a simple request by phone. She writes:

"I called the CalFed number on March 26 and spoke to a woman regarding the CalFed meetings on April 30 and May 14, regarding the CalFed process, scheduled for Redding. I said that I had heard these meetings were to occur and wanted the times and places. The woman, who answered the phone, checked several listings, stating with each one that there was no indication of meetings in Redding. She asked if I was with a group or organization, I indicated I was not then she responded, 'I can't reveal if there's a meeting but I won't say there isn't one.' She asked if I was on a mailing list and I said yes. She said I would then receive an invitation to the meetings, which are by invitation only."

The letter concludes:

"On March 16, I called the CalFed number to request a copy of the Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR. I have yet to receive one."

Lester, I find this unacceptable. Further, I am receiving complaints of the sheer volume of paper work and the amount of Draft EIRs/PEISs that are in the process at one time. It is overwhelming for those who are concerned about the potential impacts. For instance, comments are due April 1 for the State Water Resources Control Board's modification of water rights, while the Dept. Water Resources has set April 15 for their review deadline

PLEASE REPLY TO:

STATE CAPITOL
SACRAMENTO CA 95814
916.445.3353

410 HEMSTED DRIVE
SUITE 200
REDDING CA 96002
916.224.4706

2967 DAVISON COURT
SUITE A-1
COLUSA, CA 95932
916.458.4161

1170 NORTH LINCOLN STREET
SUITE 106
DIXON, CA 95620
916.678.3195

on the Water Plan Update (Bulletin 160-98). The Bureau of Reclamation set an April 17 deadline for their 5,000 page PEIS to comply with the CVPIA. And, CalFed is closing its DEIR public comment period on June 1, just 75 days after its release. I even hear of other Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service activities, focusing on habitat restoration under the Central Valley Project Habitat Joint Venture, which, in turn, will have public comment deadlines as well.

Even though some of these studies have been scrutinized by selected special interest groups during the development stage, there is an obvious failure in the process. Specifically, when documents are available for the general public to review and comment, I find that time is short and information is unavailable. I cannot allow the ones who have the most to gain or lose (that is, the general public) to be left out of the process.

Also consider, for example, one of your own handouts, which states: "Ultimately, it is the active participation of the entire public that will help fix the Bay-Delta." Reportedly, last December you said that it is important to increase the number of Californians who understand the CalFed process to more than 150 people. I agree with both statements. However, I am concerned whether or not there is one ounce of sincerity in those comments.

Moreover, it is reported that this plan to fix the Bay-Delta is the largest undertaking of its kind in the world and that California's trillion dollar economy is at risk if this plan is not resolved. As CalFed's press release states, "The Bay-Delta supplies drinking water for more than 22 million Californians, is a source of irrigation for the state's \$24 billion farm industry, and is home to the largest estuary on the west coasts of North and South America, containing plants and animals found nowhere else on the planet."

Lester, there is far too much information circulating simultaneously which the public has to read, comprehend, and make comments. CalFed's selected Alternative will impact the state's economy, the water supply of millions, the lifeblood of agribusiness, as well as the largest estuary on the American continent. And, given your expressed desire for total public involvement, I call upon you, the Executive Director of CalFed, to suspend -- not just extend -- the public comment deadline of June 1.

Sincerely,



K. MAURICE JOHANNESSEN
Senator, Fourth District

KMJ:dmc