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To the Cal Fed Staff:

Those of us, who live in the Delta, live with the constant threat of levee breaks, flooding, and agricultural limitations associated with high water tables. Why? We do so because we are willing to make these trade-offs for the consistent supply of good quality irrigation water. Can you imagine living with the risks and handicaps dealt to the Delta farm community, then you are trying to take away, or at least reduce the quality of the largest single positive factor benefiting us. You admit that going to lower water quality for portions of the Delta and yet state that this program is to benefit all. There is no way you will convince me that you can circumnavigate the Delta with your "Open Channel Isolated Facility" (Peripheral Canal) without a drastic reduction in the delta water quality.

How does the Delta come out ahead? First you are going to lower our water quality. There is no benefit in the Delta for this. Secondly you are then going to take some 140,000 to 200,000 acres of farmland out of production, to make up for what? If fair to all is an objective, wouldn't it really be fair to let those who benefit the most, mitigate the damages. Not with their money, but with their land, not ours. I know it may sound rhetorical and insane, but I am just as serious as you are. Let's "be fair to all" and mitigate 200,000 acres of the San Fernando Valley to wildlife habitat. Southern California is the big winner with no negative impact that I can see. They must have also had, such creatures as kit fox, various and sundry indigenous species that can no longer live there. What's the difference? The difference is that it would negatively impact their lives, they would have to make sacrifices to achieve their goal. How easy it is to say we'll take your water, then just to make up for it, we'll take 200,000 acres of your farmland out of production. If it's your family farm, it's just as important to you as their home is to them.

Why is it that you are so quick to take farmland out of production, when you call it wildlife mitigation. Let some farmer be offered a tidy sum for his land for housing purposes and all of a sudden there seems to exist a huge economic loss to the community, jobs and lives. You're talking about enough land to develop a community of 1,000,000 people. If a proposal was before us to take the land out of production to build a city that large, it would not have a chance to survive. At least the property owners

would benefit something in the later case. They would be selling their land for development price, not mitigation price.

I do not believe there is a difference. If you would fight the loss of farmland from conversion to residential development you should fight just as ardently for the loss of farmland for this purpose. When you take farmland out of production, the net result is the same. I oppose taking this very productive land out of agriculture for any reason.

Why do people like to live in southern California. Because it doesn't rain much. That is why it is called a desert, defined by Webster as "a dry and barren area." Why don't people like to live in a desert? Because it is dry and barren. That is the trade-off that one must be willing to make if one wants to enjoy the benefits of lots of sun, warm climate and very little rain.

When people first began to inhabit the great southern desert land. They had enough water to sustain themselves. As it grew, there was no longer an adequate supply. Rather than limiting their growth to the amount of water available, they went to the Owens Valley for their supply. L.A got bigger. They can no longer live within their water means. What followed is the taking of water from Northern California. As a result they got bigger, more money, more votes. Now they want more water yet. Is this pattern so difficult for people to see? There is no end to this ever-growing water use demand. The more water they get, the more houses they build and the bigger they get, the bigger they get the more water they need, the more water they need the more water they take, the more water they take, the more houses they build, and so-on and so-on. There is no end to this. If left unchecked, I believe that Southern California will dry up the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys and turn them into the desert that Southern California began as. The only difference is that we will still get the winter rains when they have none, deal with the fog when they have sun, live with the cold when they are warm and live with no water when they have ours.

You say you are providing more water for agriculture. I say you are robbing Peter to pay Paul. With out additional storage facilities, there is no more water, simply a redistribution of the existing available water supply.

Nothing that I can see in any of your plans creates more water. It just redistributes it to the have-nots in the south. The only way to make more water available to all is more storage facilities. It is so obvious to me; it must be to you as well.

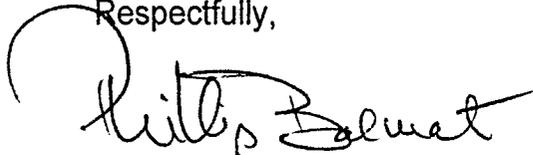
I oppose all three of the plans and adamantly oppose a new "Open Channel Isolated Facility" (Peripheral Canal). Do the right thing; spend this money on new water storage facilities that can store the mountain run-off for distribution when it is needed.

I know this is terribly unpopular to say, and everyone tiptoes around it because of the tremendous political power in the south, but I am going to say it anyway, because I believe it. If Northern California is going to survive, sooner or later the amount of water being shipped to Southern California is going to have to be limited to a finite amount.

Let's make it sooner. If not, it may take several generations, but I believe the great agricultural basin of the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys will cease to exist as an agriculturally productive land. What are they going to eat? What are they going to export to balance the trade, besides our arms technology to China?

They will have killed the Golden Goose.

Respectfully,



Phillip Balmat