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TOM WOODS
ASSEMBLYMAN, SECOND DISTRICT

CAPITOL ADDRESS:
STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0001
(916) 445-7266
 DISTRICT OFFICE:
100 EAST CYPRESS AVENUE
SUITE 100
REDDING, CA 96002
(916) 223-6300

June 17, 1998

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CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth St., Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814
Attn: Mr. Rick Breitenbach

Dear Sir:

First let me thank CALFED for responding positively to my past suggestions. As the 2nd District Assemblyman, I am in constant touch with the wishes, concerns, and desires of people representing about one third of the CALFED area of influence. The following are my comments on their behalf concerning the Revised Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR:

The Preferred Alternative: Any preferred alternative that includes moving more water through and south of the Delta must include significant additional storage and an aggressive program to reduce evapotranspiration, meadow degradation, fire and resulting siltation in our overgrown watersheds. To overlook these first essential steps would only impair a rapidly diminishing resource and redirect the burden on north-state communities, farms and the existing water storage and transportation infrastructure.

Implementation: CALFED has wisely started the restoration of our streams and rivers. The phased implementation in the final draft must take care of the basic resource, move to storage of flood and excess runoff, and finally use these excesses to solve Delta and water user shortages further south. This means we must first emphasize watershed restoration/rehabilitation beginning at the very top of our watersheds and moving down into the valley. We know now what must be done and it can begin immediately.

Next, the complex task of planning and construction of storage facilities should begin. Off stream facilities north of Sacramento, like Sites Reservoir in Colusa County, where preliminary studies show feasibility should be given first priority. It is in this region that the greatest rainfall occurs and the underlying geologic strata are less likely to be useful for ground water recharge strategies.

Finally, once these measures are being implemented, CALFED can proceed with provisions to move this new water where it can solve statewide problems.

Financing and assurances: The financing of this immense project must rest on one bedrock principle: payment ought to be made commensurate with benefits. Those that benefit the most should pay the most. To spread the cost equally to all California taxpayers would be grossly unfair to most in Northern California.

The federal government should participate heavily in watershed restoration costs—80% of these watersheds are federal lands available for use by all and if made more fire safe, will benefit all taxpayers. Downstream and hydro power water users must, however, be required to reinvest in the source watersheds to assure continued high flows of clean waters and prolonged reservoir capacity.

Assurances should be made into guarantees, meaning we should have the funds or authorities to mitigate before we proceed with each phase of the program. Guarantees of private property and area of origin water rights are fundamental and should be cast first.

In conclusion, I urge you to very closely consider the comments by our Northern California communities, counties, water and agricultural associations. These folks have been careful to give this proposal intense study and a fair review. Exploring their suggestions and satisfying their concerns will be the key to the success of this very important program.

Sincerely,

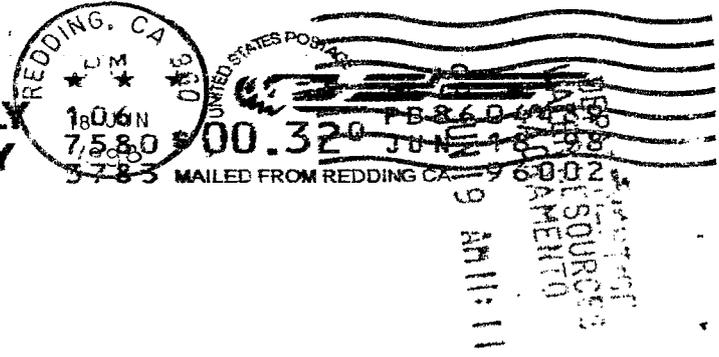


TOM WOODS
Assemblyman

TW:sf

Assembly
California Legislature
TOM WOODS
 ASSEMBLYMAN, SECOND DISTRICT
 100 EAST CYPRESS AVENUE
 SUITE 100
 REDDING, CA 96002

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