

# S.H. Merwin & Sons Inc.

38065 Z-Line Road  
Clarksburg, CA 95612  
Office: (916) 775-1698 Shop: 775-1653 Mill: 775-1282

01034

JUN 09 1998

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

May 29, 1998

## Re: A Delta Farmer's Comments on CALFED

I am a fourth generation California farmer, and I live and farm in Clarksburg in the Sacramento River Delta. I am very concerned about several of the elements in the CALFED proposals, but the most disturbing to me is conversion of farmland to other purposes.

Most of the targeted farmland happens to be irrigated land. Contrary to what some say, it is prime farmland, which is a disappearing, non-renewable resource. According to facts gathered by the California Farm Bureau, the average California farm size is 366 acres, and provides food and fiber for 129 people, or about 3 people / acre. Statewide, the CALFED proposals for agricultural land conversion could eliminate California's ability to produce food and fiber for some 2.7 million people (see Acreage Conversion Impact chart below). Further, according to the American Farmland Trust, there is already an alarming trend of urbanization causing a loss of 100,000 acres of farmland per year in California (representing lost production for 300,000 people / year). Add to that the fact that the Central Valley lost more farmland to wildlife habitat last year than it did to urbanization, and the problem is only compounded.

Program	CALFED Maximum Proposed Farmland Conversion Acreages				Reduction in People Fed by California Agriculture Due to Acreage Conversions. (Acres x (3 people / acre))			
	Sacramento Valley	In Delta	San Joaquin Valley	Totals	Sacramento Valley	In Delta	San Joaquin Valley	Totals
Ecosystem Restoration	26,000	115,000	11,000	152,000	78,000	345,000	33,000	456,000
Water Quality			45,000	45,000	0	0	135,000	135,000
Long-Term Levee Protection		35,000		35,000	0	105,000	0	105,000
Storage & Conveyance	32,000	33,500	16,600	82,100	96,000	100,500	49,800	246,300
Demand Reduction			600,000	600,000	0	0	1,800,000	1,800,000
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>58,000</b>	<b>183,500</b>	<b>672,600</b>	<b>914,100</b>	<b>174,000</b>	<b>550,500</b>	<b>2,017,800</b>	<b>2,742,300</b>

There are only 9,000,000 acres of crop land in California, not all of which is irrigated, yet it is on this irrigated acreage that over half of all the nation's fruits and vegetables are produced, along with other food and fiber. According to facts gathered by the California Farm Water Coalition, an acre of farmland requires about the same amount of water as an acre of single family homes. Further, it has been estimated that farmland provides habitat for 75 percent of the nation's wildlife. No one would dispute that farmland provides superior wildlife habitat than urban land.

CALFED was created to provide a solution to water shortages in this state, but water shortages are merely a symptom of the true problem: overpopulation. The solution is not simple, but it is obvious: mitigate water issues by reducing growth. Prohibit additional growth without adequate water supplies. Rather than convert agricultural lands, convert urban lands either to farmland, or directly to habitat. To implement such a strategy may seem radical, but it is the most responsible thing we can do for our state. Such a program would have many benefits: Increased wildlife habitat, reduced demands for water, reduced pollution, better quality of life, less flood pressure (less pavement means less runoff). It also responsibly allows for a continued food supply for future generations. If the true goal is to provide overall sustainability, urban conversion is far superior to farmland conversion. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

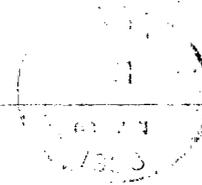
Jeff Merwin  
Manager,  
S.H. Merwin & Sons, Inc.

Jeff & Lori Merwin  
39108 I Line Road  
Clarksburg, Ca 95612

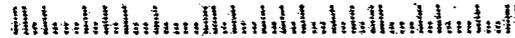
DEPARTMENT OF  
WATER RESOURCES  
SACRAMENTO

98 JUN -9 AM 11:00

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



95814/9303



C-011266

C-011266