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June 23, 1998

**Kings County  
Water District**

200 North Campus Dr.  
Hanford, CA 93230  
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Rick Breitenbach  
CALFED Bay-Delta Program  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155  
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Breitenbach:

The Bay-Delta is critical to California's economy, supplying drinking water for two-thirds of Californians and irrigation water for over 7 million acres of the most highly productive agricultural land in the world. A world that will have 6 billion people to feed in the year 2000. These 7 million acres are one of the world's most precious resources, and located in a state that will grow to 50 million people in 30 years. The quality of the water they drink, the abundance of the food they eat, and the recreation and environment they enjoy will be partly decided by the CALFED recommendations.

The conversion or retirement of productive agricultural land will be viewed as a huge environmental mistake by the people of California in 30 years, just as we now recognize the mistakes we have made to the environmental health of the Delta. The 1992 Central Valley Improvement Act, the Bay-Delta Accord, and the listing of old and new species in the Delta have already taken far too much agricultural land out of production from the lack of a irrigation water supply. The land retirement approach is a short-sighted method that would be called ridiculous by most of the 6 billion hungry people on our planet. They would view the preservation of valuable farmland as equally important as the preservation of the rain forest, the ozone layer, the Delta eco-system, or the clean waters of our earth. Taking one acre of prime California farmland out of production would require 3 or 4 acres of land somewhere else to replace its yield.

The District supports in concept the objectives of the CALFED program, namely improvements to the eco-system quality, water supply reliability, water quality and Delta facilities, and supports the principles stated to achieve these objectives. Adherence to the programs solution principles will be crucial to its success. One of the most important principles is that

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the program will not cause impacts to be redirected to other areas of California. Every objective must hold fast to that one principle. CALFED should make it clear that the phrase, "when viewed in their entirety," does not mean that a program "solution" that causes a negative impact elsewhere (such as Kings County) is acceptable.

Our area has had many adverse impacts from the Central Valley Improvement Act implementation, the Bay-Delta Accord, and the listing of threatened or endangered species that require in Delta flows. We estimate that 2,000,000 acre feet of water that has contractually gone to Agricultural users South of the Delta, has been diverted for environmental use in the Delta to meet these new guidelines. The impacts that resulted have been;

- 1) Loss of jobs for many low income and minority families.
- 2) Economic hardship for local cities and school districts as unemployment grows, taxes shrink, and if land is taken out of production the property tax base is depressed.
- 3) Wildlife reduction when land is fallowed and our groundwater recharge basins remain dry.
- 4) Increased groundwater pumping and land subsidence. As the land settles in overpumped areas, the water holding aquifers compress and are never again able to store the same amount of water. This affects all future groundwater storage programs negatively.

Any CALFED recommendation without additional storage and in Delta facilities to efficiently move water, would throw another round of these same negative impacts in our direction.

Any long term solution to California's water problems must include additional multi-purpose storage facilities. We must catch the flood water before it does downstream damage, and store and release it when the timing benefits the environmental, urban, and irrigation needs. Additional storage makes the goals of CALFED achievable. The beneficial effects of re-plumbing the Delta will be greatly increased only if more stored water is available for timely release. This is our best chance in 30 years to solve some tough problems. Let's not yield to small selfish groups with loud negative voices. We need to choose the alternative that solves not only present, but future water problems.

Increasing on stream storage (Shasta, Friant) is the logical solution to many problems. The extra flood protection and clean power generation of these projects will benefit all Californians well beyond the year 2020.

Based on your own technical evaluations, Alternative 3 with storage offers the most potential for increased performance regarding the more critical distinguishing characteristics. It increases opportunities to improve the timing, reliability, and quality of water for all uses. Well-planned surface storage increases flood control, clean power generation, recreation, flexibility, benefits to fisheries, and increases environmental protection especially in dry years. It is not the most popular choice among some groups. The slogan, "Let's get better together," means not helping one sector while hurting another. Alternative 3 with storage is the most equitable of the choices for all Californians.

Sincerely,

*Don Mills*

Don Mills  
General Manager  
Kings County Water District  
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