

City Council
Fred Harris, Mayor
Matthew Bidou, Mayor Pro Tem
George Alphin
Don DeSilva
Coglianesse



One Main Street
P.O. Box 745
Rio Vista, CA 94571
(707) 374-6451
Fax (707) 374-5063

01248

JUN 29 1998

CITY OF RIO VISTA

June 26, 1998

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

RE: Comments on the Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR

Dear Mr. Breitenbach:

Rio Vista is a city of 4,000, the largest of the small cities in the heart of the Sacramento River Delta. A mainstay of our local economy is agriculture and the people and businesses that serve it. The CALFED Bay-Delta Program as proposed would have a devastating impact on Delta agriculture by removing up to 200,000 acres from production.

This impact would ripple into our small community, causing unemployment, closure of businesses, loss of tax revenues and increasing the need for social services. Just looking at a handful of local retail businesses which serve agriculture, we estimate at least a \$10 to \$12 million loss of retail sales annually. This translates into a direct and significant impact on the City of Rio Vista's ability to provide services to its residents and threat to our quality of life.

The Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR acknowledges that the loss of thousands of acres of productive agricultural land would have a potentially substantial adverse impact on the regional economy of the Delta (page 8.6.1). However, after detailing the massive loss of jobs, total revenues and taxes resulting from this loss, the Draft EIS/EIR inexplicably concludes that these adverse impacts are not "significant." The City believes that this conclusion is clearly erroneous and is concerned that it may be driven by the need to avoid the responsibility to provide mitigation for significant adverse effects.

The Draft EIR/EIS analysis of regional economic impacts inadequately identifies and assesses the magnitude of the socio-economic impacts on the City of Rio Vista and other smaller urbanized areas within the Delta region, such as Isleton, Walnut Grove, Courtland and Hood. The local economies of these small communities are heavily dependent on agriculture. We simply do not have the economic diversity that the portions of Sacramento, Stockton and West Sacramento included in the regional study have. To "lump" us all in together, covers up the significant impacts to the more rural portions of the region. As a result, we believe that the current Draft EIR/EIS is legally inadequate.

CALFED

June 26, 1998

Page 2

The City recommends that the Draft EIR/EIS be revised to accurately identify the regional economic impacts of the proposed loss of agricultural land on Rio Vista and other smaller, agriculturally-dependent areas within the region. We believe that an adequate analysis will lead to the conclusion that these impacts are in fact "significant." We propose that these impacts be mitigated by providing financial and technical assistance to displaced farmers which would allow them to intensify the value of production on remaining agricultural lands or to bring new lands into production. It is in the interest not only of the regional economy, but also the state and national economies, to maintain a strong agricultural base. This assistance should be targeted to areas such as Rio Vista where the loss of agricultural land through the CALFED program will be most acutely felt.

Similarly, job training and economic development loans and grants should be made available to local citizens and businesses affected by the loss of agricultural land. CALFED's "Vision for the Year 2030 (Phase II Interim Report, page 5) foresees the restored Delta as a favorite destination for hunters, anglers and "ecotourists" alike. It would be easier for the City of Rio Vista to have confidence in that vision, if we could be assured the economic assistance necessary to provide a smooth transition to a more diverse local economy with increased recreation and tourism.

Situated on the Sacramento River, in the hub of the area planned to undergo habitat restoration, Rio Vista could well be an ideal location for a CALFED research and public education center. We recommend that the CALFED agencies consider working with the City to establish such a center to not only meet the needs of the program for continual evaluation ("adaptive management") and public information, but also to help our local economy.

In conclusion, the City of Rio Vista is extremely concerned with the health of the Bay-Delta system and commends the effort to find a cooperative solution to the many problems currently plaguing it. However, the City cannot support a plan which violates the central theme of CALFED ("we all get better together") and a key solution principle ("no significant redirected impacts"). The EIS/EIR must acknowledge and provide mitigation for the significant adverse economic impacts it will have on our local economy.

We look forward to your response to our comments and have every hope that you will be able to address our concerns.

Sincerely,



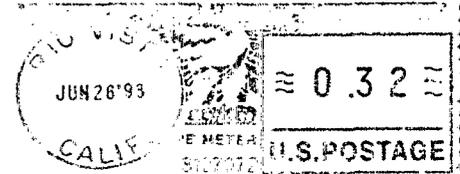
Mayor Fred Harris

CALFED
June 26, 1998
Page 3

C: Senator Maurice Johannessen
Assemblywoman Helen Thomson
Solano County Board of Supervisors
Solano County Water Agency
Delta Protection Commission
Solano County Farm Bureau

CITY OF RIO VISTA

P. O. Box 745
RIO VISTA, CALIF. 94571



JUN 29 1998

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

98 JUN 29 AM 11:27
**DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES
SACRAMENTO**

95814-5509 91



C-011883

C-011883