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JUN 30 1998

3240 Calhoun Way
Stockton, CA 95219
June 28, 1998

CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, California 95814

Attention: Rick Breitenbach

Dear Mr. Breitenbach:

I was born and raised on Roberts Island, in the San Joaquin Delta, and my family has farmed the same land for four generations. I am very familiar with the problems existing in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

I strongly oppose the so-called "Open Channel Isolated Facility", basically a canal around the east side of the Delta, totally bypassing existing channels. This alternative would be very detrimental to the Delta for the following reasons:

1. Reduced flows throughout the Delta, thus allowing more salt intrusion into the area;
2. Poorer water quality than presently exists, and we all know water quality is already bad;
3. The above conditions would contribute to dwindling fish populations and other wildlife, as well as making water unusable for drinking water and agricultural use.

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program sounds like a plan to restore and preserve San Francisco Bay and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. But any plan that bypasses the Delta will actually further destroy this fragile area, one of few in the United States. The Delta is vital to this area for drinking water, agricultural use, recreation and habitat.

One of the goals of any CALFED plan should be to clean up the Delta, and this cannot be accomplished by taking more water from the area and diverting water flow around the Delta. For years there have been countless water plans to supposedly help the Delta, and meanwhile the San Joaquin River is dying. The decline of this once vital river began with the diverting of almost all of the water from Friant Dam to Kern County corporate farms, using vast amounts of water to irrigate marginal land and make the desert bloom. When one considers the political clout exercised by these huge corporate

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farms, the members of the CALFED Board should realize why owners of family farms distrust any promises of help for water problems from government agencies.

In my opinion, the Delta is the primary area to be most adversely affected by any CALFED Plan. Yet, there is only one member of the CALFED Board connected with this area. It seems the deck is stacked in favor of Southern California and all those votes. But as Dante J. Nomellini stated at the hearing in Stockton, it will be war from many diverse groups in this area unless the Delta is cleaned up, protected and preserved.

We all realize that, behind the lofty goals and fine rhetoric, one of the main reasons for all the interest in this Plan is to deliver more, better quality water to Southern California. This area is already receiving water from the Colorado River, the eastern slopes of the Sierras, Northern California and anywhere else it can grab water. Southern California will never decrease in population, and there are no plans to limit development according to water availability. There is a LIMIT to how much water the rest of California and neighboring states can give. All communities, including those in San Joaquin County, face increased demands for water. Add a few drought years, and there may not be enough water for local use, certainly not any excess to ship more water south. Just a few years ago we were subject to water rationing in Stockton, due to several drought years. But Southern California continued to receive water without any restrictions. I talked to people in Southern California who expressed surprise and shock that we had water rationing. The news stories of flooding in Northern California for the past two years paint a false picture; these were "El Nino" years, which don't occur regularly. A week or so ago there was another news story about water going over the spillway at Shasta Dam, but this hasn't happened in 15 years.

In a nutshell, the time has come to stop "robbing Peter to pay Paul" in our water situation, and it's time for Southern California to take responsibility for their water problems by attempting to develop their own resources.

It's unbelievable that Southern California builds giant cement ditches to take rainwater (sometimes vast amounts of it) straight to the sea, when some of this water could be captured in reservoirs.

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It's unbelievable that no attempt is made to reclaim sea water through desalinization. Yes, it would be expensive, but water is no longer an endless resource.

And lastly, it's unbelievable that the final decision as to which alternative CALFED adopts ultimately rests with two people, a Governor from Southern California (no matter who is elected), and a federal official looking to make a name for himself.

In conclusion, we don't want to see the Delta end up another victim of Southern California's water appetite, like the Owens Valley and Mono Lake. I urge everyone with an interest in protecting and preserving the Delta to oppose the Open Channel Isolated Facility.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly,



BARBARA A. ELLIS

BAE:

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DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES
SACRAMENTO

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