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June 27, 1998

Lester Snow
Rick Breitenbach
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth St., Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

re: opposition to enlarging Lake Shasta

Dear Mr. Snow and Mr. Breitenbach,

I strenuously oppose any plan to enlarge Lake Shasta. I have taken advantage of the recreational opportunities along Lake Shasta - and particularly the lower McCloud river - for many years. In fact, I have fished the lower McCloud for two weeks every year without interruption for the past thirty-one years. As you know, the trout fishery on the McCloud river is a unique natural treasure of global significance. The McCloud river rainbow trout was introduced into the country of New Zealand, which has become internationally famous for its fishery. The long-range benefit of the McCloud fishery - even if measured only in economic terms - far surpasses any supposed "need" for additional water in the south. By delivering more water to the south, you will only render more acute what is already an environmental catastrophe. How ironic, to fund that on-going disaster with the annihilation of a priceless, irreplaceable, natural resource!

The McCloud river, with its renowned fishery, is seriously compromised by Shasta Dam as it stands. That dam and the overall strategy of taking northern California water for the sake of ever-increasing growth in the deserts of southern California, is an environmental tragedy, born of a prior age when environmental costs were not understood. The wholesale movement of water to uninhabitable parts of the planet for the purpose of creating short-term wealth for a few is a discredited policy. The people should go to the water - not the other way around. Rather than look for means of satisfying the greed-driven unslakable thirst of the south, you should challenge the supposed "need" which lies behind the proposal. Otherwise, you will find that the "need" can never be satisfied - only temporarily appeased.

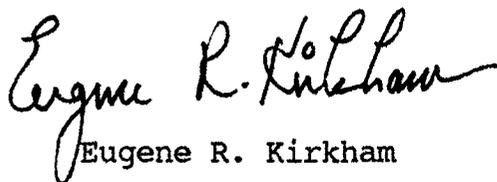
Promoting the project as a boon to farming is a transparent

political gambit which will not survive intelligent scrutiny. Grape farming has been my livelihood for nearly three decades. I know that farmers who actually live on the land (as opposed to farming in the office) are conservationists. As a group, we are very aware of the scandalous waste of our water resources which is the inescapable consequence of impounding enormous volumes of water and "ditching" it hundreds of miles. We are also aware of the availability of water-conserving irrigation technologies, which are still not in general use. We are woefully behind the technological curve in conserving the resource we have already committed. So long as the taxpayers can be duped into funding bigger lakes and longer ditches, the real challenge of conservation will never be addressed. In this age of information and awareness, it would be a serious political miscalculation to believe that such short-sightedness can be put over on the public again.

Promoting the project as "pro-delta" is shamefully misleading. Those who want to restore the delta - and I am one - are not so myopic as to use the McCloud river to achieve this important goal. The degradation of the delta is the direct consequence of the same discredited policy which underlies this expansion proposal. It is time to go to the root of the problem, rather than to fund another "quick-fix," which will only create a short-term benefit for a few while depriving our children of yet another irreplaceable natural resource.

I am surprised that further expansion of the Shasta Lake is being considered at all. If such a plan is seriously pursued, I anticipate that it will arouse a general sentiment - here and across the nation - to dismantle Shasta Dam entirely, as is now being considered in the case of Glen Canyon Dam. Our population is no longer ignorant of the consequences of environmental degradation. Increasingly, there is general awareness that as we destroy the planet, we destroy ourselves. I am confident that when you have given careful consideration to the proposal, you will not entertain for long the idea of enlarging Lake Shasta.

Sincerely,


Eugene R. Kirkham



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