



**Butte
Environmental
Council**

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Activities and Events

Environmental Education
Recycling Referrals
Environmental Advocacy
Endangered Species Fair
Bidwell Park Cleanups
Chico Area Creek Cleanups
Wetlands Preservation

Board of Directors

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Billie Kanter
Kimberly King
Chuck Lundgren
Jon Luyvaas
Christy Strauch

Executive Director

Barbara Vlamis

Office Manager

Events Coordinator
Shawn Macklin

September 24, 1999

Lester Snow, Executive Director
CalFed Bay/Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Executive Director Snow:

Please enter these comments into the formal record for your Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report and Statement.

If CalFed does not address the past, present, and planned activities on our land, California will continue to live on a water credit card, careening toward environmental and economic bankruptcy. Massive corporate farms and urban sprawl have devastated the landscape of this state.

More outrageous and costly dams and conveyance systems are not the solution to irresponsible economic policy and land use planning. We must revisit the foolish subsidies to corporate agriculture, that found it could farm in a desert by devastating their own aquifer, sucking the San Joaquin River dry, and then demanding more water from the Delta and north. We must also *demand* the end to urban sprawl in this state, to help stop the addictive belief in the unlimited availability of natural resources. An example of the behavior springing from this addiction is found in nearby Charminghael, where resident use an average of 293 gallons of water per day compared to the 120 gallons used by the average American (Sacramento Bee 5/12/99):

And the suggestion that the market will be California salvation makes me shudder! The market does not provide for the health, safety, or welfare of the public or the environment. The market provides the greed factor as witnessed by the ongoing building in floodplains in California, also subsidized by the public, and then whining about flood protection to the federal government.

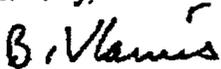
I am deeply concerned about the impacts that potential out of basin transfers will have on the area of origin environment. We view water transfers as a short-term fix for other mismanaged water projects and land uses with long term consequences to our native habitat. If water sellers, developers, and agribusiness have their way, CalFed, in the guise of repairing the Delta, may deface the northstate landscape with massive water transfers, new dams, reservoirs, and canals subsidized by taxpayer dollars. Water transfers have the potential to destroy the local environment and family farms by lowering ground water radically in areas of origin.

In addition, CalFed must:

- Maximize environmentally friendly ways to capture and store water through watershed restoration.
- Require that logging practices and residential development not degrade watersheds, an ongoing problem in California, which will continually necessitate restoration.
- Prioritize restoring the environment. For example, wetlands act as natural sponges, slowly recharging water basins below ground. California has destroyed more wetlands than any other state in the nation. Wetlands restoration is good for the environment, water supply and water quality.
- Acknowledge that "new" water does not exist except through watershed restoration. Water will either be taken from one environment for another or reclaimed from existing uses.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Barbara Vlamis
Executive Director