

THE CALFED PUBLIC HEARING, SEPTEMBER 1, 1999:

Good evening. Thank you for being here to hear our comments. I'm Don Kuhl, General Manager of the Helix Water District. I have been asked to make the following remarks on behalf of our Board, following a spirited discussion of the CALFED process. Helix serves nearly a quarter-of-a-million residents in east San Diego County. We are very serious about our commitment to supply high quality water, efficiently, and at a reasonable cost.

For these reasons we have supported the CALFED process since its beginning. It is our belief that a reliable water supply can be generated from the Bay-Delta. It is not clear from the draft EIS/EIR how the project will generate long-term increases. It is our hope that the CALFED council will work with urban water providers to develop methods to produce the much-needed increases. Helix will continue to have an aggressive conservation program that includes ongoing participation and financial support for the 4.2-acre, \$3.3 million garden we helped to develop. The 35-year-old education program helps educate our customers to better manage our meager water resources.

Helix is dedicated to safeguarding the health of our consumers. We do extensive testing of all the water we treat. We are in the process of building in advanced treatment with ozone to further improve water quality. It is our hope that water generated through the Bay-Delta will be of sufficient quality to enable urban water agencies to meet drinking water treatment regulations and to safeguard public health.

We are in hopes that the CALFED process meets its original objectives in a balanced, fair, and timely manner. It is just a matter of time until the next major drought occurs. It is absolutely vital and essential to all parties that the agreements be in place and the implementation begun before the crisis arises. The people of the State of California deserve no less from your efforts. We will continue to support such efforts and encourage our legislators to do likewise.

We feel that those stakeholders contributing to the program should share in the benefits.

We encourage the establishment of a workable process to allow continued comment and participation in the final decision as to the alternative plan.

The quarter-of-a-million residents of the Helix Water District deserve a reliable supply of high quality water and have a right to expect guidelines that balance the needs of urban water users with other interests.

Thank you.