



Shasta County Farm Bureau

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August 10, 2000

Mr. Steve Ritchie, Acting Executive Director
Cal-Fed Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth St., Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Final Programmatic EIS/EIR

Dear Mr. Ritchie:

As a member of Shasta County Farm Bureau representing over 1600 members, I feel it is necessary to comment on your recently released EIS/EIR for the Cal-Fed plan. I am concerned about how Cal-Fed programs will affect the environment on farms and ranches. Not only is Agriculture vital to the well being of California's environment, it is also the number one industry. According to the EIS/EIR, Cal-Fed plans to convert nearly a quarter of a million acres of farmland to habitat and other uses. Before it takes this drastic step, it should study the environmental impact of that land conversion.

As a farmer I understand that wildlife habitat is crucial in keeping our land profitable. We are stewards of the land and we want to be partners in environmental restoration. But we oppose requirements that tell us what to grow and how to grow it based upon what is deemed important. Cal-Fed must work with us in a cooperative spirit, with the same goals in mind.

Concurrently, to maintain productive and wildlife-friendly farms, farmers need reliable and affordable water. Cal-Fed must move aggressively to develop new water storage that provides adequate yield. Without more storage, California won't have enough water for the environment in dry years. That means water will be taken away from farms, especially during droughts. Without water, farmland loses its value as habitat and as a vital food resource for California's growing population.

Cal-Fed needs to hold public hearings to explain its plans before they become final. It's responsibility should be in clarifying questions, and addressing concerns by the citizens that are going to be affected by drastic changes in their land use and availability of water. Cal-Fed should not finalize its plan until citizens have adequate opportunity to review it, comment on it, and make some educated decisions on the future of water in California.

Sincerely,

Christine McArthur

Shasta County Farm Bureau Director

cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
Rep. Wally Herger

Governor Gray Davis
State Sen. Maurice Johannesen
Assembly Member Dick Dickerson
County Supervisor Clarke

County Supervisor Kehoe
County Supervisor Wilson
County Supervisor Fust
County Supervisor Hawes