

2081 Hidden Ranch Road
Somerset, California 95684

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AUG 17 2000

CALFED Bay-Delta Program

August 12, 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 an El Dorado County emu rancher and a state and national director for our industry association, I am concerned about the future of our state. The Cal-Fed EIS/EIR was released on July 21, 2000, with little time allowed for public or written comment. I respectfully request that you extend the time to review and comment on your document and program. I also request that you hold hearings to explain the effects of the Cal-fed program for agriculture and to listen to the property owners and farmers in our state.

Throughout this entire process of hearings and attempts to read the highly technical, tedious document, I have been concerned about the loss of water, loss of farmland, the lack of adequate water storage, and the loss of wildlife and habitat that thrives on private lands. Currently, the government owns approximately one-half of the land in California, while 75% of the wildlife habitat prefer to live on private lands where farmers are good stewards.

It appears to me that you are being shortsighted in your plan to remove nearly a quarter million acres of California farmland, calling it "unavoidable". Cal Fed must plan strategically and look for ways to reduce the loss of farmland by conducting its habitat-restoration on existing government-owned land.

As California's population increases requiring more food and water, the additional water needed should come from storage, not farmers. Farmers understand adequate, available water is needed especially during drought years. Capturing more of the high flows during wet winters, especially in above ground reservoirs, assures water for farms to grow plants and livestock providing food, a vital resource for a rapidly growing population. Cal-Fed must recognize California farmland as an essential and valuable natural resource of global importance.

Sincerely,



Sharyn Felts

CC: Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
Congressman John Doolittle
Secretary William J. Lyons, Jr.
USDA Secretary Dan Glickman

Governor Gray Davis
Senator Tim Leslie
Assemblyman Rico Oller
El Dorado County Board of Supervisors