

SANTA CLARA COUNTY FARM BUREAU

**605 TENNANT AVENUE, SUITE B. MORGAN HILL, CALIFORNIA 95037
(408) 776-1684. FAX (408) 776-7804**

August 14, 2000

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

Re: Final Programmatic EIS/EIR

Dear Mr. Ritchie:

I am writing to ask you to extend the time to read and comment on the final environmental report released July 21. I also believe Cal-Fed should hold public hearings on the plan, so we who must abide by it can understand how we fit the plan.

Agriculture is a part of the environment- the land, water, and air we all need to thrive. California farmland is a natural resource of global importance. Cal-Fed plans to acquire or control hundreds of thousands of acres of California farmland, mainly for fish and wildlife habitat. Cal-Fed has not done enough to study the environmental impact of this large-scale land conversion. And Cal-Fed has not looked seriously enough for ways to reduce farmland losses.

The government already owns half the land in California, yet 75 percent of the wildlife exists on privately owned land. We have done a better job of maintaining habitat than had the government. We take seriously our roles of stewards of the environment and wish to be partners with the government. Cal-Fed should encourage landowners to enhance voluntary habitat-conservation efforts.

Cal-Fed needs to move more quickly to develop surface water storage with adequate yield to accommodate the increasing population and environmental needs. Water conservation cannot make the same strides it has made in the past. We will work to become more efficient, but drought will take a serious toll on California's environment and economy unless new storage with additional yield comes on line soon.

Farmers recognize and support the need to use water more efficiently. In fact, our farms have increases tonnage of agriculture of agriculture production by two-thirds since 1967, while using less water. But conservation has environmental consequences of its own. Reducing water use can affect the ecology of the farm, for example by allowing salts to build up in soil. Agricultural water conservation may also reduce the flow of water into underground aquifers or other water bodies. Cal-Fed should study these impacts before imposing water-efficiency requirements

Sincerely,


Jeannette Dickens
President

cc.	Senator Dianne Feinstein	Governor Gray Davis	County Supervisors
	Senator Barbara Boxer	State Sen. Bruce McPherson	Don Gage
	Rep. Zoe Lofgren	State Sen. John Vasconcellos	James Beall
		Assembly Memeber Peter Frusetta	Peter McHugh
			Joe Simitian
			Blanca Alcarado