

Californians

August 18, 2000

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

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CALFED Bay-Delta Program



Dear Mr. Ritchie,

Today the political truth regarding the current focus of the Cal-Fed plans is the enhancements of the Bay-Delta ecological systems. These plans are geared to also serve key metropolitan populations with water supplies at the expense of valley economies. As you know, Central California has water sheds that provide substantial uncaptured waters that need to be stored behind existing dams for basin recharge, drought protection, flood control, river restorations and population growth.

Water quality swaps with metropolitan should not take place until realistic commitments are made protecting the existing central California valleys economies with additional storage of water.

The importance of a secure food and fiber supply for our nation seems to be taken for granted these day. We should not become totally dependent on other nations for food as we have with fuel supplies.

The tax base of our valley's region is almost totally agriculture related industries. You shut down agriculture, price it out of the markets, so goes your tax base for schools, state, county, city and federal taxes. It may be true that agriculture cannot afford to pay the same prices for water as metropolitan can, but why does the cost of building new storage have to come out of only the cost of the water? Why can't agriculture share the expense of additional storage with many other entities such as flood control, river restoration and tax money paid to the federal and state government from this agriculturally driven economy? Without additional waters the present tax and employment base will shrink.

The AB3030 plans were a good beginning but they need more encouragement and work. If the politicians pushing Cal Fed feel the tax paying, job providing citizens of the central valley are going to give up local control over their groundwater basins, they are mistaken.

State and Federal officials need to provide guidelines, local support and realistic deadline criteria for AB3030 plans to deal with their own local water issues. A good example of this is the current California's Department of Water Resources Integrated Storage Investigations Unit promising local involvement and control.

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We in the valley know what the issues are:

- a. Our population is growing faster than the whole of California and will double by 2020 to 2025.**
- b. The economies of our valley are tied directly to agriculture.**
- c. Reasonable river restoration concepts are supported if additional storage of waters are gathered behind or along side existing dams.**
- d. All of us need to solve the groundwater basins over-drafting problems together.**
- e. Additional waters after the above is met can be offered to our metropolitan neighbors.**
- f. Groundwater aquifer qualities need to be protected and enhanced.**
- g. Financial incentives should be put in place to encourage all to be more efficient with groundwater use.**
- h. New reservoirs have not been added for long periods of time.**
- i. California is approximately 34th in receiving its tax dollars back from our federal government. There should be money to use for water storage.**
- j. Most importantly water is the true infrastructure for any strong economy.**

Bottom line, we all wish to help; but open the doors for public discussion. Do not try to push this on a fast track and expect it to hold.

The federal/state appointed water czar concept will not be accepted.

We look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,



**William B. Pitman
Founder**

CC: Madera County Farm Bureau