

VICTOR D. TOGNAZZINI

August 4, 2000

Mr. Steve Ritchie, Acting Executive Director  
CALFED Bay/Delta Program  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Ritchie:

I am writing to ask you to extend the period in which we may view and provide comments on the final CalFed EIS/FIR released July 21, 2000. This is so vastly important an issue for California, not only for this generation, but also for generations to come, that all of us, as citizens, cannot afford a rush to judgment. I would further request that public hearings be held on the plan so that we, who will be subject to its mandate, can understand how we will be affected.

My family has farmed, ranched and protected habitat for three generations on our family ranch in eastern Santa Barbara County. I am also a Farm Labor Contractor and have farming interests in the Santa Maria Valley where my livelihood and the livelihoods of all farmers and ranchers depend on a continued supply of water. We have seen the population forecasts for the future and we know that we must be able to feed that burgeoning population. To do that, provisions must be made for surface water storage facilities. I am dismayed when I hear the echoes from past drought years of establishing water conservation methods in the urban areas. Those conservation methods that were possible were taken, and have continued to be used. New conservation methods will not come easy, nor will the results be as dramatic. Water conservation became a great political "mantra" that brought us "gray water" gardens and bricks in commode tanks. Certainly, some work may be done in urban water conservation, but what of the farm? The irrigation practices of agriculture in the key growing areas of our state are at the cutting edge of technological efficiency.

I have not had time yet to digest this latest plan and will not have time if the comment period is not extended. I did, however, join with over 1000 representatives of agriculture who attended your 16 CalFed hearings last year. I was one of the 800 people, mostly agriculturists, who spoke at those hearings. I am deeply disappointed that CalFed and its operating agencies have seemingly turned a deaf ear to us. I know that there is a sincere effort being made to protect the environment, but you need to listen to those closest to the land, those whose lives have been lived protecting the environment. To follow the dreams and schemes and experiments of well-meaning academic environmentalists, will ultimately destroy that which we all want to protect. Please give us time to respond to this latest installment and please listen to what we have to say. All Californians, our food supply and our environment will be the beneficiaries.

Sincerely,

  
Victor D. Tognazzini

Cc: Governor Gray Davis, Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Barbara Boxer,  
Congresswoman Lois Capps, State Senator, Jack O'Connell, Assemblyman Abel Maldonado,  
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

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