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9 August 2000

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

RE: FINAL PROGRAMMATIC EIS-EIR

Dear Mr. Ritchie:

My family and I have been raising cattle in Contra Costa County since 1974. We are very concerned as to how the Cal-Fed plan will affect the economy, the environment and the livelihood of farmers and ranchers in California.

We are asking that you please extend the time to read the EIR released on July 21, 2000. One month is not sufficient time to read and interpret the plan. There should be public hearings so that farmers and ranchers who will have to abide by the plan will at least be able to understand completely how they will be affected.

We in agriculture take very seriously our roles as stewards of the land, and believe very strongly that Cal-Fed should encourage and support our efforts to enter into and maintain voluntary habitat conservation programs. We are very conscious of the wildlife on our lands and anything we provide for our livestock is shared by the wildlife such as water, salt, grains, hay and shelter. We in agriculture contribute greatly to a positive quality of life. If the Cal-Fed plan proceeds without further hearings and without input from the agricultural community, it will be agriculture which will be sacrificed and regulated to extinction.

Does California really want to lose hundreds of thousands of farmland acreage with the subsequent loss of habitat preservation. We would hope not.

The emphasis of Cal-Fed should be to deliver optimal surface water storage with the ability to accommodate the increased demands of an exploding population. In addition, the constant threat of drought years will take a serious toll on the California environment that only sufficient water storage efforts will help to ease.

Taking farmland out of production will only result in the loss of healthy, affordable foods, and the loss of many, many jobs from rural California, and the domino effect of losing habitat protection. California will be left with nothing but over development and a severely diminished quality of life.

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Again, we only ask that you allow more time to review the plan. After all, this was released at a time when crop producers are in the most labor intensive part of their growing season. Please hold public hearings so those who will be most affected will have a chance to be heard. We are willing to form partnerships and work with Cal-Fed but only if we completely understand what it all means.

Thus far, we have managed water and lands very well, thereby providing a harmonious atmosphere for wildlife. We are the true conservationists. We only ask that you hold public hearings before the plan is finalized and you embark on a path from which there will be no turning back.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Jackie Stewart