



Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.

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 Affiliated with the California Farm Bureau Federation and the American Farm Bureau Federation

August 21, 2000

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

Subject: Final Programmatic EIS/EIR

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Dear Mr. Ritchie:

California farmland is a valuable environmental resource. Where the Cal-Fed plan will take nearly 250,000 acres out of production, it will have a significant environmental impact. Cal-Fed has not given enough thought to this problem, and its plan needs to look for ways to reduce the loss of farmland.

As a county Farm Bureau manager, I represent farmers and ranchers throughout a Southern California county. Many of these farmers and ranchers are directly dependent on State Water Project water. The remaining farmers and ranchers are certainly affected by the competing demands for water and are indirectly affected by Bay-Delta decisions. They share concerns of farmers and ranchers throughout the state that the loss of farmland under the Cal-Fed plan will have widespread adverse effects on agricultural productivity. They also worry that the emphasis on reducing agriculture indicates that Cal-Fed fails to recognize California farmland as a valuable environmental resource. As a representative of these farmers and ranchers, I am obligated to express their – and my – concerns that the Cal-Fed plan as now presented is flawed and needs additional citizen input and improvements.

Cal-Fed should work with farmers on voluntary habitat conservation. That way, the land can help feed our growing population and provide habitat at the same time. But farmers can't provide habitat or feed people without reliable and affordable water.

It is absolutely essential that Cal-Fed develop water storage with

adequate yield. New storage will help guarantee water for the environment in dry years, so water won't have to be taken away from farms. A shortage in any part of the farm economy affects all farmers and ranchers in California.

Cal-Fed should tell us how its plan has changed and how it will affect people. The Cal-Fed plan should not be finalized until California's citizens have an adequate opportunity to review and comment on it. I believe Cal-Fed should hold public hearings to explain its plans before they become final.

Sincerely,



Robert Eli Perkins
Executive Manager
Secretary

cc:

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Senator Barbara Boxer
Rep. Mary Bono
Representative Ken Calvert
Representative Ron Packard
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