

CALFED, in order to meet program goals and objectives, while adhering to its Solution Principles, is adopting a policy to fully assess and disclose potential adverse environmental effects to agricultural resources on a programmatic, sub-program and project specific basis. When potentially adverse environmental effects are identified, a mitigation plan to avoid, minimize, or reduce or eliminate impacts over time will be developed and implemented. When impacts are unavoidable, compensation for impacts by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments will be made.

The CALFED mitigation policy and principles include:

- CALFED will maintain the productivity and flexibility of agricultural resources to the greatest extent practicable.
- CALFED goals and objectives will be met through CALFED actions that maintain land in private ownership to the greatest extent practicable. Government acquisition of land will only occur as a last resort.
- Categorical exemptions will not be used to exclude from CEQA review CALFED projects that would convert agricultural lands for habitat acquisition.
- CALFED to the greatest extent practicable, will achieve consistency with existing federal, state, and local agricultural land protection policies.
- Any CALFED program, action or project will contain a landowner coordination component to be implemented at the onset of scoping and planning and continue through the life of the project.
- CALFED, in consultation with CDFA will develop a process and procedures for consistent orderly evaluation and review of subsequent actions
  - Formal and early consultation with CDFA on any action having the potential to directly or indirectly impact agricultural land productivity or agricultural water resources.
  - An empirical evaluation process of project impacts based on the LESA (Land Evaluation and Site Assessment) method.
  - Threshold of significance of impact - any potential impact; no de minimus impact
  - Develop a process to establish standards of adequacy for mitigation
- Implementation of mitigation measures (timing and extent) will occur prior to or during the CALFED action necessitating the mitigation.
- The cost of mitigation will be born by the CALFED program or project causing the need for mitigation.
- CALFED recognizes that mitigation at site specific or sub-program levels may necessarily be remote from the site of impact, and essentially programmatic in nature. There is a nexus between agricultural impacts and off-site mitigation due to the fact that projects are fragments of a program of wide scope. Appropriate mitigation may need to be off-site and of a character different from the site-specific impacts.
- CALFED recognizes that there is a nexus between cumulative agricultural impacts resulting from individual CALFED actions and projects that may not be present on an individual action or project basis. Appropriate mitigation may need to be off-site and of a character different from the site-specific impacts.