

DEC 01 1995

M e m o r a n d u m

To : Mr. Lester Snow

Date : November 28, 1995

From : Department of Fish and Game

Subject : CALFED's Interest in DWR's North Delta Program

At your request, I convened a meeting of CALFED agencies and CALFED staff. The purpose was to review the elements of DWR's North Delta Program to determine their applicability to CALFED long-term planning process. There was no representation from EPA or NMFS.

The general context of the meeting was that we would review the value of each element to the CALFED program at its present stage. We would recommend to you which elements of the program should be continued because they help meet an immediate CALFED need. The understanding would be that CALFED would ask DWR to continue those elements. The general criterion is that any element providing information pertinent to the programmatic EIR/EIS to be prepared by CALFED should be continued, while elements pertinent to a project specific EIR/EIS should not be supported by CALFED now. The underlying consideration is that CALFED should be willing to acknowledge now that at least one of the alternatives carried forward to the programmatic EIR/EIS stage will include some features of DWR's North Delta Program. It, however, is premature to make any judgments as to features which will be included in CALFED's project specific EIR/EIS. DWR's North Delta staff has been charged with preparing a project specific EIR/EIS, so their needs are very different with CALFED's.

An additional factor affecting our recommendations is that CALFED staff urged us to provide recommendations as to how some of their information needs which are beyond DWR's North Delta Program could be satisfied.

An element by element review of DWR' North Delta program follows.

Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Studies

Habitat evaluation models and mapping have been nearly completed and will have value to later stages of CALFED's planning, but their application now to DWR's North Delta Project alternative is a project specific task and should not be supported by CALFED. (see Study Area Mapping element for related work.)

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One sub-element is baseline habitat documentation the already purchased Grizzly Slough property. CALFED should support continuation of that sub-element because it facilitate mitigation and enhancement activities on the property. This in turn will have considerable value as a mitigation or enhancement element for many alternatives, and the farther along habitat restoration is, the greater will be its value to CALFED.

Biological Assessment

This element has been completed. It is a project specific element, so CALFED has no need for its continuation.

Flood Analysis

This element has been completed, and it provides tools which will be useful to CALFED in evaluating flood effects in the North Delta of any alternative. CALFED should support maintaining the staff resources in anticipation of doing work for the programmatic EIR/EIS.

State Water Project and Delta Modeling

This element has been completed.

Evaluation of Impacts on Fisheries

Limited portions of this element have been completed, and DWR staff is considering contracting for additional fishery analysis work in anticipation of its potential value to CALFED. CALFED has a need for complex analyses of fishery impacts which go far beyond those associated with the North Delta. Hence it should address the need through some vehicle other than the North Delta Program. CALFED staff urged us to recommend an alternative approach. I suggest that a committee of senior level biologists from the agencies oversee a process which would involve assigning experts the task of defining the analytical framework to be used in evaluating impacts for each species or group of species, including both fish and selected organisms in the food web. The resulting analytical frameworks would receive peer review and then approval by the senior level committee. The analytical frameworks would then be used by the staff and/ or consultants evaluating alternatives. I believe this approach reflects ecosystem management in that the resulting analysis would be a compendium of what we know of the habitat requirements of species at various levels in the food web. (Steve Yeager indicates that while he supports my proposal, he is

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concerned that from a practical standpoint using DWR's contracting resources may give CALFED access to resources it would not be practical to get in some other fashion.)

The senior level staff I have in mind are Randy Brown, Perry Herrgesell, Marty Kjelson, Ken Lentz and perhaps others. I would be willing to take the lead in initiating the effort.

Jurisdictional Wetlands Delineation

This element has been completed and no further work is anticipated.

Dredged Materials Environmental Study

This element has been completed, but consideration is being given to extending the contract to allow for collecting additional core samples. This contract would be extremely costly to reinitiate later, due to the need for competitive bidding, the highly technical and specialized nature of the work, and stringent QA/QC requirements. Nevertheless, the panel did not anticipate a need for further such studies during CALFED's programmatic EIR/EIS phase. Hence CALFED should not support amending the contract.

Cultural Resources Investigation

This element has been completed. CALFED will have a continuing need for cultural resource evaluation, and the CALFED staff should decide what is the best way of getting that done.

Recreational Studies

This element has been completed, and there is no need for a CALFED recommendation.

Study Area Mapping

The work planned for the North Delta program, which involves habitat mapping, has been completed. CALFED, however, has the need for similar mapping throughout the Delta and DWR has aerial photographs which could be used to complete such maps. The maps would be useful to CALFED during the screening of alternatives during phase 1, if they were available by the end of January 1996. DWR does not

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believe it is realistic to meet that date. The maps would also have considerable value for the programmatic EIR/EIS. Unless USBR has done similar mapping, CALFED should ask DWR to complete maps for the remainder of the Delta, to the extent that that can be done with existing aerial photographs.

Design Studies

The work planned for this element has been completed. It included some work on fish screens. A major CALFED need is determining the feasibility of fish screens. Randy Brown is completing a memo which summarizes the status of knowledge on fish screens, including an assessment of gaps in knowledge. This memo should serve as the basis for assessing CALFED needs and programs, which I think are likely to be best implemented through the IEP Fish Facilities Program, although CALFED needs some mechanism to insure timely results. One specific opportunity which should be considered quickly is the restoration of models at U. C. Davis Hydraulics Laboratory.

CALFED also has a shorter term need to assess screening feasibility during the preliminary screening of alternatives early next year. The most feasible way of doing that is probably assembling a team of biologists and engineers who have expertise in fish screen technology from the CALFED agencies to review alternatives.

Seepage Monitoring

This is a project specific program which involves monitoring a recently completed well system. Either the monitoring needs to be continued or the wells need to be destroyed. DWR staff believes the minimal cost of monitoring and the large capital investment, which would be lost if the wells are destroyed, warrants continued monitoring. That seemed reasonable to the panel reviewing the program, but the decision should be left to DWR management, as they have the primary expertise to make this determination.

Sedimentation and Scour Monitoring

This is project specific work, and there is no need for CALFED to support its continuation.

Aerial Photography

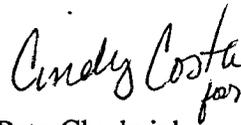
This work has been completed and serves as the basis for the additional work recommended under the Study Area Mapping element.

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Report Preparation and Responses to Comments

This is project specific work and there is no need for CALFED to support it.

DWR staff also asked for comments on two elements of work being done by North Delta staff which are not part of the North Delta Project. One concerned the development of a management plan for lands previously acquired by DWR in the East Delta. The group felt that it was in CALFED's interest to continue this work because of the potential habitat value which could be useful in the CALFED program. The second concerned fisheries enhancement measures being developed in coordination with the Corps of Engineers. We concluded that we did not have the knowledge needed to make a recommendation.



Pete Chadwick
DFG/CALFED Bay-Delta Liaison

cc: Mr. Bob Potter, DWR
Mr. Mike Ford, DWR
Ms. Jean Elder, USFWS
Mr. Steve Yeager, CALFED

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