Stakeholder Concerns -- Diversion Effects on Fisheries

Urban/Ag

- The DEFT proposal to tighten export standards is an inefficient way to protect fish. It will cost water, but provide little extra protection.

- The water users have given up water several times in past years and in return have gotten promises of future makeup. Are drawing the line on the DEFT/DNCT actions. Fish protection is fine, as long as it does not cost water beyond the Accord. Why should the water users support CALFED if it is just going to take away more water? They would be better off without CALFED.

- The way to get fish protection is to stop killing fish at the pumps. We know when we are killing fish. If we stop pumping when fish are being killed, and pump more when fish are not there, we can reduce overall fish mortality while increasing exports.

- An approach that allows sharing of future increases in water supply with the environment is attractive. It puts both interests on the same side of the table. Getting half of an increased supply is better than getting nothing.

- DEFT is ignoring other sources of fish mortality that may dwarf the impacts of the projects. The PG&E take of Delta smelt is huge. Commercial fishermen may take 70 - 80 percent of all adult salmon. In this context, mortality caused by the projects is not that large.

Environmental Concerns

- Standards are sure, water blocks allocated to the environment might be mismanaged. If the environment must rely upon ownership of water to reduce entrainment, then it might spend its water poorly, or it might run out of credits, or the money needed to buy water credits might dry up in the future.

- The environment has been hammered for a century by water development. The idea that the environment cannot benefit without supply benefit ignores this fact. The environment need major new benefits before the playing field will be level. After that, benefits can be shared.

- The water user insistence on new water supply ignores the benefits the users get from environmental restoration. A restored environment means delisting of fish and greater reliability for the projects. By insisting on water supply benefits, they make environmental restoration much more difficult to achieve.

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- In fact, as a policy position, extractions from the system should be capped at about current levels, then the cap should decline over time as soft path approaches are implemented.

- Storage has never been good for the environment in the past. The burden of proof is on CALFED to show that new storage, even storage designated for environmental purposes, can be operated to provide for environmental benefits.