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March 15, 1999

Assemblyman Michael Machado
State Capitol, Room 5136
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblyman Machado:

Subject: Vernalis Adaptive Management Plan and Related Actions

I am writing to provide you with an update of recent CALFED Bay-Delta Program decisions with respect to the proposed Vernalis Adaptive Management Plan and related actions. The CALFED Policy Group met on March 11 and agreed to move forward with the following six-point plan, designed to respond to the various stakeholder concerns with appropriate, balanced suite of actions:

1. Proceed with VAMP in 1999.
2. Model proposed 1999 operations, with and without VAMP, by the end of March to quantify potential impacts of various scenarios and develop an operational plan which mitigates for impacts which may be identified. Establish a monthly review process to track actual operations.
3. Develop specific action plans to formulate a comprehensive solution:
 - Resolve by May 1999 the South Delta Barrier or alternatives strategy as part of the South Delta Improvements Program.
 - Develop a strategy to achieve and maintain adequate water quality in the south Delta region.
 - Develop a specific plan to address low dissolved oxygen concentrations in the vicinity of Stockton.
4. Evaluate, and if appropriate, dredge south Delta channels to improve water movement.
5. Expedite the evaluation of re-circulating water pumped from the Delta by the CVP and/or SWP down the San Joaquin River to help meet flow and water quality requirements.

CALFED Agencies

California The Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Water Resources
California Environmental Protection Agency

Federal Environmental Protection Agency
Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service

Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Department of Commerce

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6. Improve water management practices such as conservation and conjunctive use of surface and groundwater resources. The plan should also describe how state and federal funds provided as part of the VAMP agreement will be allocated to meet this objective.

Resources Agency staff is taking the lead on resolving questions regarding the state share of funding commitments for VAMP.

Considerable effort has gone into resolving concerns with respect to south Delta barriers or their functional equivalent. The involved agencies are currently working on two alternative approaches simultaneously. The first approach involved an optimized operable barriers proposal, which includes operational criteria, physical structures in specific locations, and appropriate mitigation measures. The second approach explores an alternative which does not involve the operable barrier concept. According to the schedule agreed to on March 11, the involved agencies will have draft proposals ready for review by the South Delta Improvements Team on March 18. The Policy Group will discuss progress on the alternative proposals on April 15 and will make a decision on May 13.

In response to suggestions made at the February 9 VAMP meeting, CALFED scheduled two public meetings to allow stakeholders an opportunity to provide direct input into the south Delta improvements evaluation process. The first meeting was held on March 5, the second will be held on April 2, in Room 1131 of the Resources Building, from 1:30 to 4:30 PM. Public notices will be sent out next week for the April 2 meeting.

I am optimistic that the cooperative actions of the CALFED agencies and the stakeholder community will result in a balanced set of improvements for the San Joaquin River and South Delta region. Please feel free to call me at (916) 657-2666 or have your staff contact Stein Buer at (916) 653-6628.

Sincerely,



Lester A. Snow
Executive Director

cc: Policy Group Distribution List