

December 1, 1996

To: Water Quality Technical Group

From: Rick Woodard
Water Quality Program Manager

Subject: Water Quality Technical Group Meetings

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us on November 20, 1996 and for your thoughtful comments on our work. **Our next meeting is scheduled for December 9, 1996.** For those participants who were unable to join us on November 20, the following is a brief summary of the meeting results.

Ecosystem, Urban, and Agricultural water quality teams were organized earlier in the process. The teams were asked to identify water quality parameters of concern to each beneficial use category, to establish target ranges for these parameters, and to consider actions which, if taken, may improve the quality of Bay-Delta waters. Meetings of the teams resulted in identification of water quality parameters of concern, target ranges, and 32 potential actions. The teams were then asked to identify the actions which appeared to be most promising, and which should receive early study emphasis. When these tasks were accomplished, the individual teams were merged into a single group, and other stakeholders were added. The meeting on November 20, 1996 was the first meeting of the new Water Quality Technical Group.

It had been planned that, at the November 20 meeting, the group would agree on a list of actions upon which study could commence immediately. Ten actions ranked as promising by the three study teams were suggested. On November 20, tentative consensus was reached on beginning with evaluating these, but the need for additional clarification was expressed. Many or most of the action statements are vaguely worded, thus making it difficult for participants to rank them for study. There were also recommendations that no actions be rejected until further clarification occurred and until they had received adequate evaluation.

After considering your comments, we have decided to carry most of the actions forward into the Water Quality Common Program. Detailed analysis of these actions will be undertaken during the impact analysis phase of the Programmatic EIR/EIS. We do intend to recommend to the Water Quality Technical Group that we drop from consideration those actions which would use water to reduce concentrations of pollutants. Through the meetings of the urban, agricultural, and ecological water quality teams, we received a clear expression of disagreement with the principle of using dilution exclusively for reducing pollutant concentrations. Storage and conveyance actions may result in dilution of pollutants as secondary benefits, however we will be proposing that such actions are not to be taken exclusively to achieve water quality benefits. The remainder of the actions will be carried forward.

Currently, we envision the Water Quality Common Program as consisting of:

- The list of water quality actions exclusive of those requiring dilution flows.
- Detailed plan for evaluating the actions during the impact analysis phase of the Programmatic EIR/EIS process.
- Early Implementation Projects.

The latter element of the Water Quality Common Program represents an important opportunity. Each of the common programs are likely to be set up in implementation stages. Stages will be implemented sequentially over the term of the program. The first stage will include projects which can be implemented early before overall program environmental documentation is complete. Any candidate project for early implementation will be subject to a pre-feasibility study which will include an evaluation of the technical, financial, institutional and legal constraints. Proposition 204 and associated federal authorization provides some funding for early implementation projects.

At the December 9 meeting of the Water Quality Technical Group, we will be requesting your suggestions for specific projects which you believe should be considered for early implementation. **I believe this represents an excellent opportunity to accomplish water quality objectives in the nearer future, and strongly encourage you to assist us in developing this early implementation stage.** We request that, along with your ideas, you bring supporting data, maps, or other materials which help to provide the rationale for project selection.

The purpose of the Water Quality Common Program is to enable us to focus Programmatic EIR/EIS processes on the most important water quality actions, and to set the stage for impact analysis. However, it should be understood that not only the actions comprising the Common Program will be investigated in the EIR/EIS process. As various actions to address Bay-Delta problems are integrated into program alternatives, there will be a need to evaluate water quality impacts. This will certainly be the case when various permutations of storage and conveyance options are evaluated. Flows to enhance ecological resources will be another subject of water quality evaluations, and there will be others as the process moves forward.

At our December 9 meeting, we will solicit your opinion on the approach outlined above, and will accept any further comments on the target ranges for parameters. Also, we will be providing you with restated actions which are intended to be more precise and accurate; we will solicit your comments on these, in preparation for their finalization as elements of the Water Quality Common Program. To accomplish the latter task, the actions have been divided into five categories: mine drainage; urban and industrial runoff; agricultural drainage; water and wastewater treatment; and, watershed coordination. At the meeting we will organize break-out groups to consider each of these action categories. In addition, the break-out groups will consider early implementation projects related to that action category. The products of the

break-out groups will be brought before the group as a whole.

After your comments from December 9 are incorporated, we intend to present our work products at a public workshop on January 28, 1997, and to the Bay Delta Advisory Council at its January 30, 1997 meeting. Following incorporation of comments resulting from these events, the Water Quality Common Program will become a chapter in the CALFED Component Refinement Report, which will be the basis for integrating common programs with the variable storage and conveyance programs into alternatives. Modifications will be made to the alternatives to account for linkages between programs and they will then be fed into the Programmatic EIR/EIS impact analysis process.

Enclosed are minutes of the November 20 meeting, and an agenda for the December 9, 1996 meeting of the Water Quality Technical Group. If you have any questions, please call me at (916) 653-5422 or (916) 653-2994.

Enclosures