

To: Rick Woodard, CALFED  
From: Doug Morrison, USFWS  
Subject: Comments on forming CALFED Water Quality Program Science Review Panel and Working Groups  
Date: 23 February 1998

Responses to questions posed about Science Review Panel and Working Group in your February 13, 1998 letter to Water Quality Technical Group are given below. See also FWS comments on Water Quality Implementation Plan outline and framework (dated 17 Feb 1998). FWS supports the four cornerstones for the implementation process presented in your letter.

The Water Quality Technical Group, being mostly composed of a broad range of stakeholder representatives, is an effective means of stakeholder input. However, to obtain effective input from CALFED agencies on the topics presented in your February 13 letter, FWS recommends that CALFED staff also meet specifically with water quality representatives of CALFED agencies.

#### Science Review Panel

1. Yes, there should be a science/technical review panel.
2. Panel Composition: The panel should be composed of nationally recognized experts in water quality protection and restoration planning and implementation, but with no direct involvement in the bay-delta watershed to be as objective as possible (i.e., an independent review panel). The panel should cover expertise in the major components of the Water Quality Program: environmental, drinking water, agricultural water use, etc. May be most effective to form subgroups for each component. For example, environmental subgroup would review issues/topics primarily or solely concerning environmental water quality. However, the entire panel should review program-wide topics such as implementation framework, goals and objectives, adaptive management strategy. Panel members preferably should have experience with large-scale (i.e., landscape/watershed) programs similar to CALFED.
3. The independent scientific/technical review panel should be an ongoing process throughout the life of the Water Quality Program.
4. Panel Tasks: The panel should review all technical and scientific aspects of the Water Quality Program. The panel, or an ad hoc panel subcommittee of independent experts coordinated by one or two panel members, could also provide guidance on special topics. An example topic could be the toxicological effects of

metal contaminants (e.g, mercury, selenium, etc) on fish and wildlife. A group of independent experts under the auspices of the review panel would be convened to address various subjects (targets, performance measures, bioindicators, source control strategies, remediation strategies, science/technical information needs) under this topic. This approach has been effective in other large-scale water quality protection/restoration programs (e.g., south Florida, Chesapeake Bay, various National Estuary Programs).

Working Group:

1. Yes, there is a need for a working group to develop and write an implementation plan. We also recommend a Water Quality Program steering committee composed of CALFED agencies (and perhaps a representative of each major stakeholder group: environmental, urban water user, agriculture). This steering committee would oversee Water Quality Program planning, implementation, and management. Alternatively, the steering committee could also function as the work group developing the implementation plan, similar to the Interagency Development Team (IDT) for conveyance alternatives. We recommend separate steering committee and work group.
2. The work group developing and drafting the implementation plan would be composed of scientists, engineers, and planners from within and outside (e.g., academia) CALFED agencies (including CALFED staff) with expertise in water quality protection/restoration planning and implementation. Subgroups could be formed to develop the components of the plan for each beneficial use (i.e., environmental, drinking water, etc). For example, the environmental water quality component subgroup would have aquatic ecotoxicologists and ecologists from CALFED agencies (e.g., EPA, USFWS, USGS), CALFED staff, and academia. To be as unbiased and objective as possible the work group (drafting team) would not have members employed (directly or as consultants) by stakeholders; the approach used for ERPP strategic plan drafting team. The existing Water Quality Technical Group (WQTG) would provide additional technical expertise supporting the work group and reviewing work group products throughout plan development, and be an avenue for stakeholder input. Please consult FWS recommended three tiered approach to Implementation Strategy Framework in our comments on Water Quality Implementation Plan outline and framework (dated 17 Feb 1998). The work group would not be a subgroup of the WQTG; the WQTG would support the work group.
3. Work Group Tasks: The work group, which would include CALFED staff, would develop the implementation strategy and write the implementation plan. Thus, the work group would function similar to the IDT for conveyance alternatives. This would be the sole function of this work group. It would be disbanded when the plan is completed. The Water Quality Steering Committee would oversee program planning, implementation, and management throughout the life of the program. The steering committee would oversee the drafting work group, providing guidance on

the implementation strategy. Additional special work groups would be formed during the life of the program as needed. The WQTG and independent science/technical review panel would also exist throughout program duration; hence a three tiered approach.