

Summary of Meeting Transfers Agency Group August 19, 1997

Key Points

- Agency representatives felt that the first BDAC Transfer Work Group meeting was useful. The presentation by Jerry Johns of the SWRCB was very helpful to educate stakeholders on the existing water transfers market and limitations of SWRCB authority to scrutinize transfer proposals.
- The purpose of dividing the list of identified water transfer issues into two categories, one oriented at BDAC and one oriented toward TAG, is to help facilitate the process of developing a range of options for resolution for each issue. Some issues that are more technically oriented would be better served if options were initially developed by agency representatives with technical assistance from some stakeholders. Options for issues requiring “political consensus” should be initially developed by the BDAC work group.
- The concept of a “clearinghouse” should be discussed in more detail. The Bureau of Reclamation has begun to work on such a process and should brief this group on its efforts.
- Options for resolution may be similar for several issues, ultimately resulting in a more comprehensive set of policy recommendations. However, at this point in the process, the issues should be dealt with individually.
- The next BDAC Transfers Work Group is scheduled for September 17, 1997.

Discussion Overview

- A request was made to get copies of reports on third party impacts referred to at the BDAC water transfers meeting. These would be helpful to make sure everyone understands the basis of some stakeholders’ third-party impact concerns.
- A suggestion was made to prepare a chronology of water transfer/conjunctive use events of the past 10 to 15 years. This would include studies, proposals, transfers, pilot projects, legislation, etc. Such information may be useful in understanding the role of transfers in the future and their limitations (based on past experience). It was noted that nearly 500,000 acre-feet of San Joaquin Valley interbasin transfers already occur almost every year.
- The primary issues articulated by the BDAC participants were third-party impacts, including environmental, and cumulative impacts. The more technical issues were not raised as primary concerns. This allows us to “split” issues such that the BDAC work group and this group can each move forward on developing a range of solution options. It was suggested that the issues be split into those that require “political consensus” and those that are initially more technically oriented.
- Caution was expressed about how the list of divided issues is presented to BDAC. We should be careful not to present the list as “this is what you get to work on and this is what we will do”. The list should be presented as a prioritization, noting where BDAC should focus its initial efforts. Explanation should be provided stating that the purpose for

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dividing issues is to facilitate development of a range of options, but does not mean that stakeholders will not have the ability to comment and discuss issues that TAG will initially work on.

- A question was raised regarding the process that will be undertaken to develop resolution to these issues in the context of a programmatic EIR/EIS. Rick responded that it is unlikely we will find resolution to all of the issues. However, we need to resolve issues to the point where a lack of resolution does not impede the ability to move a preferred alternative forward. The Programmatic EIR/EIS should probably have some recommendations but will not have detailed solutions to any of these issues.
- Concern was expressed with placing the environmental values issue into the BDAC list. The issue relates to the definition of what is reasonable versus unreasonable. This should be discussed and options developed within the agencies first, especially since some of the agencies have the mission of protecting the environment.
- A suggestion was made to place the issue of local control over transfer initiation and approval into the BDAC list. It was felt that this is a stakeholder concern that needs to be addressed by stakeholders. It was stated that the issue of local control may be part of the answer to the issue of third-party impacts.
- A suggestion was made to broaden the scope of the facility access issue to include all facilities (not just CVP and SWP). However, it was commented, this could bring Colorado River issues and use of those facilities into CALFED which may not be appropriate. The agencies with facilities strongly felt that this issue needs to be initially dealt with in the TAG, not in BDAC.
- The issue regarding the transfer capacity of new facilities seems best suited to be initially worked on by CALFED staff. The issue of carriage water may also best be dealt with by CALFED staff.
- DWR has provided comments to Mike Heaton on issues 1, 4, 5, and 6. These are the issue that most concern DWR. Issue 1, related to the definition of transferable water, warrants much more discussion, probably even at the agency manager level. This issue needs to be resolved, but it was felt to maybe not be the most pressing issues. DWR felt that the issue of facility access was of primary concern to them.
- On page 7-2 of issue paper 7, confusion was expressed over the second stated sub-issue. Mike clarified that the issue is generally a question of whether there needs to be time constraints placed on the ability, if allowed, to replace transferred surface water with groundwater.

Action Items

- Comments on issue papers 7 and 9 shall be provided to Mike Heaton by Friday, August 22, 1997. Comments should be limited to "red flag" concerns or helpful suggestions.
- A draft paper regarding the role of CALFED modeling in transfer analysis and speculative quantification of potential transfer capacities and demands will be distributed to agency representatives prior to mail-out to the BDAC Water Transfers Work Group. Comments should be provided back to Greg Young.
- Rick Soehren will consider agency comments regarding the division of issues to BDAC and TAG and redraft a list for agency review prior to the BDAC Work Group mail-out.
- Mike Heaton will meet next week with Kathy Kelly and other DWR representatives

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regarding their comments on issues 1, 4, 5, and 6.

- Rick Soehren will obtain copies of the RAND report and other documents from Ray Hoagland.

The next meeting of the Transfers Agency Group is scheduled for September 9, 1997, 1 p.m. in the Resources Building (location to be determined).

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