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Letter to invite Water Management Development Team Members

As you are aware, the establishment of an Environmental Water Account (EWA) has been explored as one element of CALFED's Water Management Strategy. This work has shown that an EWA would be inextricably linked to other aspects of the CALFED program. With this in mind, CALFED will have to broaden its approach to developing the EWA in order to consider other aspects of water management. We are writing to request your participation in refining the EWA concept, and in developing a framework to guide its implementation as an element of a broader Water Management Plan (WMP). We are calling this group the Water Management Development Team (WMDT). Governor Davis and Secretary Babbitt have requested that significant progress in development of a framework for the EWA be made by mid-November, and that the framework be completed by mid-December of this year.

A collaborative agency/stakeholder effort has been proceeding since March 1998 to evaluate various aspects of an EWA. Several workgroups, including the Diversion Effects on Fish Team, the No Name Group, and the DEFT-No Name Coordination Team, have done extensive modeling, analysis, and evaluation of various tools that could be used to structure and implement an EWA, and identified the scope of potential environmental benefits. The objective in doing this work has been to develop a set of assets and operating rules that can be used flexibly to achieve environmental benefits in response to real time assessment of need. Overall, the EWA would function to optimize the efficient use of water resources to provide the greatest environmental benefits for listed species in particular and the Bay-Delta ecosystem in general.

As you are aware the EWA is important to the overall success of the Water Management Strategy. Therefore, at this point there is a need to establish a framework for the EWA that goes beyond the conceptual phase and to further define and coordinate an EWA with other aspects of water management in the system. The WMDT will thus consider issues that are broader than the EWA as those issues are relevant to the development of both the EWA and the WMP. Specifically, the WMDT is being asked to evaluate a range of water management tools and to develop a framework for the EWA and for a Stage 1 Water Management Strategy as part of the broader WMP.

The WMDT will be composed of state and federal agency and stakeholder representatives. It is envisioned that the WMDT will meet on a weekly basis through mid-October to make recommendations to the CALFED Policy Group that will be critical to the development of the EWA and the broader WMP. As the process moves forward, the meeting schedule may intensify. To support the WMDT effort, CALFED has established a Water Management Coordination Team (WMCT). This group will provide modeling and technical analysis. Other existing CALFED technical groups will also be available to provide support for the WMDT. The WMDT will present their recommendations to the Bay Delta Advisory Council and to the Policy Group.

With the short timeline in mind, we invite you to attend the first meeting of the WMDT on Tuesday September 21, 1999 from 1:00-4:00pm in Room 1131 of the Resources Building. We also request that you identify an alternate who can attend future meetings in your absence, should that be necessary, and who can fully participate in this process.

Please RSVP to Ron Ott at (916) 657-3319. If you have any questions please call Ron or Elise Holland at (415) 896-5900. We look forward to seeing you on the 21st in Sacramento.

Sincerely,

Lester Snow
Executive Director, CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Attachment: Proposed WMDT Management Structure

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