

**Overview of BDAC
Meeting**

E - 0 0 2 7 7 6

E-002776

Overview of BDAC Meeting

E - 0 0 2 7 7 7

E-002777



Information Only

Memorandum

Date: March 25, 1998
To: CALFED Policy Group
From: Lester A. Snow
Executive Director
Subject: Overview of March 19-20, 1998 BDAC Meeting

Summary

- BDAC members expressed caveated general support for staging and linking Program actions in the Implementation Strategy.
- Southern California interests recognized that the CALFED solution must address northern and southern California interests and provided suggestions for establishing and maintaining the linkage between the regions..
- A few BDAC members continue to be concerned over the delay in the SWRCB water rights hearings.
- BDAC members generally agreed with two financial principles: to impose fees on water users to help finance the common programs and that costs could be allocated using a benefits-based approach, but only after agreement has been reached on mitigating impacts for past water projects.
- Throughout the two days, BDAC members and public speakers expressed interest in revising the Water Use Efficiency Program to meet their needs and interests.
- BDAC and public speakers provided suggestions for broadening public participation in and oversight of the CALFED process.

CALFED Agencies

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

Federal Environmental Protection Agency
Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service

Detailed Discussion

Implementation Strategy. BDAC was asked to comment on the concept of staging and linking actions in the Implementation Strategy to provide assurance that all stakeholders and the environment equitably benefit from the CALFED Program. BDAC members expressed general support for the concept, as long as two basic concerns are addressed. Environmental representatives stressed the need for quantifiable performance standards for measuring how well the actions are meeting the Program goals. Those standards could be used as milestones to be met before proceeding to the next stage in the Program. Business and agricultural interests warned that some goals or milestones may be unattainable and questioned whether achieving other Program goals should be delayed or stopped if the milestones could not be met. In related comments, some members suggested the possibility of proceeding on planning for new storage facilities in parallel with implementing early common program actions. Co-chair Sunne McPeak emphasized the central importance of the concept of "due diligence" in developing and assessing milestones and Program linkages.

Southern California Stakeholder Concerns. BDAC heard from nearly 25 representatives from southern California businesses and financial institutions, local governments, water districts, and environmental and community organizations. Many of the representatives recognized that a Bay-Delta solution will include restoring and rehabilitating the Bay-Delta, in exchange for a reliable, clean water supply from northern California. They emphasized the importance of clean, reliable water on businesses and the economy, and realized that their ratepayers will be asked to pay for improving the Bay-Delta. Environmental and community interests stressed that southern California can meet much of its water supply needs, without additional water from the Bay-Delta, if they received support for urban water conservation/recycling programs, ground water cleanup and conjunctive use programs, inverted water pricing structures, and reducing or treating salinity in Colorado River water. They claimed that southern California is using the same amount of water now than it was in 1970, even though the population has increased by 28%.

SWRCB Water Rights Hearings. Environmental representatives continue to be concerned that the delay in the water rights hearing will threaten adherence to the 1995 Bay-Delta water quality standards established to implement the agreement in the 1994 Accord. (See attached memo.)

Assurances and Finance. In addition to discussing staging and linking of actions, BDAC briefly touched on CALFED management entity issues. Several BDAC members wanted to be kept informed on the status of stakeholder discussions and the work of the Natural Resources Law Center.

In regards to finance issues, BDAC members generally agreed that urban and agricultural water user fees should be used to pay for Program actions which generate user benefits. Environmental interests are seeking commitments from water users to pay for environmental impacts of past water projects. After there is agreement on the amount water users should pay to mitigate for these past impacts, environmental interests will likely agree to using a benefits based approach for allocating costs of the CALFED Program actions to water users and the public. Water users suggest that the environmental costs of using water from the Bay-Delta can be internalized by using their fees to pay for portions of the common programs.

Water User Efficiency Program. Comments on water use efficiency, in general and as stated above under *Southern California Stakeholder Concerns*, as well as comments on the Water Use Efficiency Program were made throughout the meeting. BDAC members questioned the concept of using public funds for new storage facilities and the projected costs of the program (especially in regards to the costs of water recycling program), and requested review of revisions to the Water User Efficiency Program.

Public Participation. BDAC members and public speakers offered the following suggestions for broadening public participation in the CALFED process. In addition, Assembly Member Machado recommended legislative oversight over the CALFED Program and selection of the preferred alternative. The assembly member and several BDAC members expressed the desire that the draft EIR/EIS comment period be extended.

- Discussion by a small group on the technical feasibility of agriculture conservation measures.
- Use local task forces and organizations to educate businesses on the CALFED process.
- Establish liaisons with the state Chamber of Commerce and the League of California Cities.
- Establish a public process to address specific, major comments on the draft EIR/EIS.
- Work with BDAC members to schedule community forums on the draft EIR/EIS.
- Invite state and federal representatives to public hearings.
- The potential need to recirculate the draft programmatic EIR/EIS, especially if any of the Program elements are substantially changed in response to comments.

Overview of March 19-20, 1998 BDAC Meeting
March 25, 1998
Page Four

- Allow BDAC, either through the work groups or a BDAC workshop, to review the program element implementation plans and the Program-wide Implementation Strategy.
- Incorporate field trips on critical issues of concern into BDAC meetings.
- Schedule a "day at the Legislature" for BDAC members to educate representatives on the CALFED Program, consistent with state and federal law.

Action Required

No action is required -- this item is for information only.