

EIS/EIR Comments



Date: April 24, 1998

To: CALFED Policy Group

From: Lester A. Snow, Executive Director
CALFED Bay-Delta Program

Subject: Agency Comment and Response on the Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR

Summary

At the April 1 CALFED Management Team meeting, information was provided to assist agencies in reviewing and revising the draft environmental documents. In addition, CALFED Management Team recommended approval for the establishment of a new team of agency staff for the purpose of reviewing agency comments separate from the public comment process.

Detailed Discussion

Information for Agency Review. The following information is being provided to assist CALFED agency staff in commenting on the various documents contained in the Programmatic EIS/EIR. CALFED is not planning to revise all draft documents for the Final Programmatic EIS/EIR. The attached list shows a comparison of documents which exist in the Draft, those that are proposed for the Final and those which will be revised. Comments on all documents including those which are not proposed for revision will be addressed in the new Response to Comment Appendix. It is suggested that the focus of agency comments should be on technical changes and content. Editorial comments would be considered in documents which are proposed for revision. While we have identified some documents which will be revised, it is recognized that if substantial comments are received on documents not currently proposed for revision that this may result in the need to revise additional documents.

Agency Review Team. The CALFED agencies, through participation in the CALFED process, are co-authors of the draft environmental documents. As such it makes sense that the agencies should not be commenting on their own documents through the public review process, but rather should be making appropriate changes in the document as part of the

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

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transition from draft to final. CALFED is proposing to establish a process separate from the public comment process for the purpose of addressing agency comments on the Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR (see attached diagram). These revisions can then be used to respond to comments from the public.

A team of agency representatives would be created for the purpose of considering and incorporating agency comments. The Agency Response Team (ART) would be comprised of one member from each agency. Staffing is anticipated to be at a level equivalent to the IDT team. ART members would be responsible for coordinating their agencies comments and bringing them to the team for consideration. The ART would meet every week. Each meeting would have a particular focus and would be conducted similar to the three-day agency meeting that was held to discuss comments on the Administrative Draft. Meetings are anticipated to begin the first week in May. Comments and responses agreed upon by the team would be incorporated into the document and used in responding to public comments. Comments which result in disagreement would be elevated to Management Team/Policy Group for resolution.

Action Item

It is recommended that Policy Group verify the focus of agency comment efforts and approve the process for responding to agency comments. Adoption of a process would include additional agency staff commitments.

Attachments