

Water Use Efficiency

Program Component Update Water Use Efficiency

Current efforts in the Water Use Efficiency Program focus on refinement of assurances and development of CALFED agency assistance programs. Assurances will include mechanisms related to urban water conservation, agricultural water conservation, water recycling, and management of water on refuges and wildlife areas. CALFED agency programs will include expansion of existing programs to deliver planning assistance, technical assistance, and funding assistance. New CALFED programs may include promotion of local water management changes that improve ecosystem health or improve water quality, and new funding programs for water recycling.

This document briefly describes the current status and any additional products or actions expected by August 1998, when a draft preferred alternative is selected and a revised draft programmatic EIS/EIR is compiled.

I. REFINEMENT OF ASSURANCES FOR WATER USE EFFICIENCY

Assurance mechanisms will provide an opportunity for water suppliers to demonstrate efficient use, provide information to CALFED agencies for most effective targeting of assistance programs, allow CALFED to make efficient water use a condition of receiving CALFED benefits, and allow CALFED agencies to better target existing sanctions against agencies that fail to demonstrate efficient use.

I.1. Assurances for Urban Water Conservation

CALFED has proposed a two-part assurance mechanism for urban water conservation, with DWR certifying water suppliers' compliance with the long-range planning and water shortage contingency planning elements of the Urban Water Management Planning Act, and the California Urban Water Conservation Council certifying water suppliers' implementation of Best Management Practices. **Legislation will be required to authorize and clarify these roles.**

DWR has initiated a dialogue with stakeholders to: (1) establish an interim review process for urban water management plans required in 2000, and (2) identify ways to make the subsequent evaluation process constructive and not burdensome. This stakeholder dialogue will continue through summer 1998.

On April 8, 1998 the CUWCC voted to accept, in principle, the role as certifying entity for water suppliers' implementation of BMPs. This acceptance is contingent upon CUWCC approval of a final certification process framework and partial funding support from CALFED. A detailed draft certification process has been prepared, and work is continuing on the details of the process. Some remaining issues include certification of water wholesalers, requirements for small agencies, and geographic scope of the water supplier certification.

I.2. Assurances for Water Recycling

The Urban Water Management Planning Act requires California urban water suppliers to include an evaluation of the feasibility of recycled water use. Certification of urban water management plans by DWR would assure a basic level of analysis by local and regional agencies.

Some interests, in particular the Water ReUse Association, have suggested the consideration of stronger assurances for water recycling. The proposed additional mechanisms would grant preferential access to CALFED benefits according to either (1) percentage of local wastewater flows that are recycled, or (2) local expenditures on water recycling in comparison to amount of Bay-Delta water use. CALFED staff will work with CALFED agencies and stakeholders to consider additional refinement or expansion of water recycling assurances. (This effort will be closely tied to development of assistance programs for water recycling. See Section II below.)

I.3. Assurances for Agricultural Water Conservation

CALFED proposed in March 1997 that the Agricultural Water Management Council serve as endorser or certifier of agricultural water management plans in order to provide assurance of agricultural water conservation. At that time, CALFED proposed acreage and planning criteria that the new AWMC would need to meet in order to provide adequate assurance of efficient agricultural water use. **The most common concern expressed at public hearings on the draft EIS/EIR is dissatisfaction (among both agricultural and environmental interests) with the way that CALFED proposes to assure agricultural water use efficiency.**

In order to move toward development of an assurance mechanism that meets CALFED needs and has adequate stakeholder support, CALFED will convene a carefully facilitated focus group composed of representatives of CALFED agencies and stakeholder groups. This focus group is intended to clarify stakeholder interests, distinguish interests from positions, and identify areas of agreement and disagreement among stakeholders. One area where there may be some consensus among stakeholders is on convening an expert panel on water use efficiency. The focus group may be able to suggest questions that an expert panel could help answer, and individuals or institutions that should be represented on such a panel. Recommendations of a focus group will be available by August 1998.

I.4. Assurances for Refuge Water Management

Three CALFED agencies, CDFG, USFWS, and USBR have been working with the Grassland Resource Conservation District to develop an Interagency Coordinated Program (ICP) for optimum water use planning for wetlands of the Central Valley. In March 1998 these agencies released a draft report proposing that each refuge prepare an *Effective Water Use Plan* by June 1999 and update the plan annually thereafter. The draft report also identifies 14 Effective Water Use Practices that should be evaluated by each refuge manager. CALFED staff will continue to work with the Interagency Coordinated Program to suggest ways that refuge water management planning can be made consistent with urban and agricultural water management planning, and ways that the planning process carried out by refuge managers can provide comparable and adequate assurances.

II. DEVELOP IMPLEMENTATION PLANS FOR WATER USE EFFICIENCY

Most water use efficiency measures are implemented at the local or regional level. A primary function for CALFED agencies will be to provide planning assistance, technical assistance, and financing assistance so that lack of assistance is not an impediment to the implementation of cost-effective measures at the local level. Some of these assistance programs will be expansions of existing efforts of CALFED agencies, while additional new programs may be designed and implemented to meet new CALFED objectives.

II.1. Implementation Plan for CALFED Conservation Assistance Programs

Certain CALFED agencies, in particular DWR and USBR, have existing programs to provide water conservation assistance to local agencies. Building on these existing programs, CALFED staff and agencies will draft a long-term plan that identifies the types of assistance that may be needed in the future, the array of agencies best suited to deliver this assistance, and the funding levels necessary to carry out these long-term assistance programs. The focus on this plan will be the first stage of CALFED implementation. It is expected that a draft plan will be prepared by August 1998. **Progress on this activity is highly dependent on active cooperation by agency staff.**

II.2. Program to Implement Water Use Efficiency for Multiple Benefits

Some improvements in local water management, such as improvements in a farm's irrigation system, may not be cost-effective from the grower's perspective. However, these improvements may yield water quality improvements or improvements in ecosystem health. Thus, it may be appropriate for entities such as CALFED to fund some of the cost of actions that improve local water management. DFG has been given the lead in developing a work plan for program development. This effort will be coordinated with continuing refinement of the programs for water quality, ecosystem restoration, and watershed management. A progress report will be available in August 1998.

II. 3. Programs for Water Recycling Assistance

Water recycling offers significant opportunities to improve water supply reliability. However, there are many impediments to the implementation of recycling projects, including financial impediments. CALFED staff and agencies will draft a long-term plan that identifies the types of assistance that may be needed in the future, the array of agencies best suited to deliver this assistance, and the funding levels necessary to carry out these long-term assistance programs. In addition, the plan will focus on financing assistance needed to implement large-scale water recycling projects throughout California. This plan will be coordinated with the CALFED financing plan. A status report on development of an expanded water recycling assistance program will be prepared by August 1998. **Progress on this activity is highly dependent on active cooperation by CALFED agency staff.**

LEVODET1.--R. Soehren--05/19/98