

Preferred Program Alternative



M e m o r a n d u m

Date: July 8, 1998

To: CALFED Policy Group

From: Lester A. Snow
Executive Director *L. Snow*

Subject: Developing a Draft Preferred Alternative

Summary

For the past several months CALFED agencies and stakeholders have been considering potential approaches to structuring a decision on the draft preferred alternative, phased implementation of the preferred alternative, and potential conditions and linkages necessary to assure equitable and efficient implementation. The attached draft paper, "Developing a Draft Preferred Alternative," incorporates many of the comments provided by CALFED agencies and stakeholders.

Detailed Discussion

Significant changes have been made in the draft document since the June 4 CALFED Policy Group meeting.

- The document now discusses program development and actions at two time periods. Attachment A includes the Components of the Preferred Program Alternative at the time of the ROD and findings. Attachment B includes Example Stage 1 actions (approximately within the first 7± years).
- The most significant change involves proposed conditions for staged implementation of Delta conveyance options (Page 6). The draft identifies a proposed primary strategy of optimizing Delta conveyance based on the existing Delta configuration or modifications of Delta channels. The contingent strategy is to consider a dual Delta conveyance with an isolated facility only if the primary strategy does not meet CALFED goals. Feasibility and environmental studies on all components would be initiated in Stage 1,

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

including the isolated facility in order to assure that the contingent strategy could be implemented if needed.

- The summary descriptions of the various program components have been expanded.
- The decision conditions have also been refined based on extensive agency and stakeholder input.

The attached draft identifies three critical time periods for detailed consideration of actions and decisions:

1. Pre-ROD - 1999. Between now and the Record of Decision and Findings (ROD) on the Programmatic EIS/EIR. Decisions and actions proposed for this period will be covered in a separate report. However, a section has been added to the draft which identifies the status of the various program elements at the time of the ROD (Attachment A).
2. Stage 1 Implementation - Years 1 - 7 +. During Stage 1, covering approximately the first 7± years of implementation. This period is the primary focus of this report and attachments (Attachment B).
3. Long-term implementation - 30 years. Includes Stage 2 and 3.

Background

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is evaluating three programmatic alternatives for solving the problems in the Bay-Delta system. It is likely that the selected alternative will be staged over the 30-year implementation period due to the large scope, the wide range of funding options, legislative, regulatory, and institutional changes required, and the need to gather scientific information to guide future adaptive management actions. The staged implementation must be designed with appropriate linkages and conditional decision points to assure equity and stability over time. The attached draft document describes in general terms some proposed linkages and conditional decisions for staged implementation and decision making, based on extensive discussions with CALFED agencies and stakeholders over the past several months, as well as based on the cumulative body of information developed in the CALFED Bay-Delta Program process.

Action

Concurrence Item. Staff is seeking guidance from the Policy Group on the further development of the attached report, which could serve as the vehicle for framing the draft preferred program alternative. The Policy Group and supporting staff (Management Team and Agency Revision Team) have had the opportunity to comment on earlier versions, focusing sequentially on the nature of the decision and on the early implementation actions. Staff is now seeking an integrated review, with particular emphasis on the need for balance and equity in the decision framework and actions. Staff proposes to augment the package with more detailed proposals for implementation institutional arrangements, assurances, costs and cost distribution frameworks, and implementation actions for Stage 2 and 3.

Attachments