

**CALFED Policy Group  
Meeting Summary  
July 14 and 15, 1998**

**Update on EIS/R Comments**

- Staff summarized the top five areas of public comment as being water conservation, new facilities, agricultural issues, area of origin/water rights, and financing and beneficiary pays. All comments will be responded to before proceeding with final EIS/R.

**Concerns and Comments**

- We need to review and get of sense of issues sooner in order to be able to make modifications to our documents and program direction. Need to identify gaps and discrepancies that need to be addressed in next draft.
- CALFED needs to ensure that we continue to keep the process open and help staff flag issues.

**Preferred Program Alternative**

- Staff provided overview of major changes in the July 8, 1998 version of the document *Developing a Draft Preferred Program Alternative*.

**Concerns and Comments:**

- Need to show a clear commitment towards making a through Delta conveyance strategy work. The Dual-Delta Conveyance Strategy should be a contingency strategy.
- Text changes in the decision conditions for surface storage were discussed . Concern was expressed over the need to clarify CWA 404 compliance strategy and suggestions were made to add a separate bullet.
- Regarding document review and editing — Need to be sure agencies have an opportunity to review and comment before next version is distributed to public and stakeholders. A small state and federal agency group needs to be continued and representatives added as needed.
- Comments on draft included:
  - Increase focus on specific decision conditions
  - Redefine Stage 1 as a 7 year period
  - Emphasize adaptive management
  - Need more program integration

- More thorough explanations on issues--a section on findings need to be part of document
- Add more introduction

Actions:

- Agreement to compile state and federal comments on July 8 draft by COB Friday, July 17, and schedule follow-up meeting for next week.

Finance Strategy

- Staff presented proposed funding strategy for three parts of the program as examples; levees, ecosystem restoration and storage. Staff will continue working to prepare a draft cost estimate and rough allocation strategy for all elements of the program.

Concerns and Comment.

- In discussing the levee plan, CALFED agencies determined that linkages between program elements will be very important and it will be difficult to make decisions on individual elements without understanding the big picture relative to the linkages with the other programs.

Accord Extension

- EPA staff presented an options paper regarding the extension of the Accord.

Action

- Policy Group agreed to support a 9 to 12 month simple extension and to present this approach to stakeholders to develop some consensus for this approach.

ART - Suisun Marsh Levees

- Staff and DFG presented the proposal by DFG to add the Suisun Marsh Levees to the Levee program. Three options were proposed. The CALFED staff recommendation was to postpone the decision until additional information could be developed on the costs and benefits/linkages to the CALFED program of adding the marsh levees.
- After discussion the agenda item was deferred to the August Policy Group meeting. Additional information was requested regarding more background on the Suisun Marsh and its potential linkages to the CALFED program.

## **Ecosystem Restoration Program Update**

Staff presented an update on the ERPP and the status of the 3 volumes. Primary work effort is focused on volume 3 — the strategic plan. The relationship of the ERPP strategic plan, CMARP, the indicators work group, and the Conservation Strategy was described.

### **Concerns/Comments**

- A draft of the CMARP program needs to be in the revised draft EIS/R and must include all elements of the CALFED program including the water quality program.
- A draft of the performance indicators (indicators of success) needs to be done by September 1998.
- Concern over if we have adequate baseline biological information to get effective indicators. Need to be able to have starting point to measure success against. Need to have resources to analyze data as well as collect data.

## **Fish Diversion Effects Draft Report**

- Staff and the Work Team presented a summary of the *Diversion Effects on Fish - Impacts and Issues* draft report. The report addressed three of the teams tasks:
  - Which species, populations, and life stages are most sensitive to diversion effects under No Action and Alternatives 1,2,3?
  - What degree of benefit and impact will the common programs provide?
  - What is the risk and chance of success of species recovery for each alternative?

### **Concerns/Comments**

- Analysis only looked at Delta actions and as a result doesn't show complete benefits of any alternative. Analysis needs to include operations, upstream and ocean actions for full evaluation.
- Storage assumptions were questioned. By using the highest level of storage and assuming a significant portion would be exported the impacts to all alternatives were elevated.
- Once the evaluation expands to include upstream and ocean actions we will need to determine if we meet recovery goals.
- Base case estimates were discussed. Need to improve and clarify base case assumptions.
- Need No-Name Group to look at operations while fish group does their evaluation. DEFT and no-Name Group need to work together.

- Agreement on: Need to develop best conveyance configuration for fisheries— Alternative 1 and 2 can be improved. Need to optimize the through Delta conveyance configuration and operation plans. Need to broaden geographic scope of actions to achieve fishery recovery.
- Next steps— (1) Develop through Delta conveyance alternative that optimizes benefits and minimizes impacts to fish while considering water supply and water quality,
- (2) Develop specific actions for implementation in Stage 1, (3) Evaluate dual conveyance implementation actions.

### **Restoration Coordination**

- Staff provided an update on the Proposal Solicitation. 182 proposals were received and are being distributed to the Technical Review Panels for review and scoring. The Policy Group will be asked for a recommended decision on the proposals to fund at the September meeting.
- Questions were asked about the possibility of redirecting funding from one category to another depending on the number and quality of proposals received. Staff will be exploring this option once the Technical Review Panel review is complete.

### **Conservation Strategy**

- Staff presented an update on the development of the conservation strategy, including the objectives, process, team members and schedule.