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STOCKTON, CA 95206**

May 3, 1999

Secretary Mary D. Nichols
State of California
Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: CALFED Bay-Delta Program
South Delta Improvement Plan

Dear Secretary Nichols,

At the April 30 CALFED South Delta Improvement Public Meeting two proposals were put forth by the SDI Team for flow alterations in the South Delta. Both proposals fall short of solving the flow problems caused by operation of the CVP and SWP pumps. Alternative 1, will seriously harm our farms. (I live one mile north of Old River, and two miles east of Middle River. I've been here all my life -50 years. So, please accept these comments as from one who is a witness to the facts.)

SID Alternative 1. "Single Barrier Alternative" will put South Delta farmers out of business by "de-watering" the San Joaquin. This plan calls for a single fish barrier installed at the head of Old River, without the operation of the three tidal barriers in Old River, Middle River and Grant Line Canal. This configuration, at low tides, with the project pumps "ramped up" to 10,300 cfs, will turn our South Delta into a mud flat; water levels will be well below our irrigation siphons.

Fish agencies are calling for Alternative 1. They concede they are not "sure" about the effects on farming. They "think" they will have to dredge 1 million cubic yards of silt from Old and Middle Rivers, and Grant Line Canal to ensure water for our crops. This is not economically feasible. Nor will it improve water quality, as more saline water will intrude from the West.

Secretary Nichols, please question this Alternative. We need the tidal barriers to give South Delta farms enough water (albeit of questionable quality) to keep our farms healthy in the summers. A better course would be to use Alternative 2 (install 3 flow structures) and utilize them whenever necessary to keep the South Delta watered.

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A further problem with the SDI Alternatives rests with the conversion of farmland into wildlife habitat. This plan calls for over 40,000 acres of our privately owned farms to be converted and/or managed for wildlife.

Secretary Nichols, we have been farming here in the South Delta for over 100 years. Most of our acreage is above sea level, and is not suitable for tidal restoration. Our farm production creates jobs, and supports our families – (we have children and grandchildren who need to get to college, too!). This land is our investment, our retirement, our life. *We are a community*, Secretary Nichols, not potential swamp for the State to use as an “adaptive management” experiment.

We have expressed our concerns at the many CALFED public meetings – lately at the two South Delta Improvement meetings. We are trying very hard to work with the CALFED program, but the various agencies seem bent on making it impossible for us to farm. Can it be that CALFED staff is not informing the Policy Committee of the facts?

It is not the fault of farmers on Old River, Middle River or the Grant Line Canal that the operation of the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project have caused our rivers to dry up or flow backwards, harming and confusing the fish. Solving the problem by destroying our farms is not the course CALFED should be pursuing.

I am asking for your help in keeping CALFED true to its own Solution Principals. Drying up our source of irrigation water is not “everyone getting better together”.

Sincerely,



Rogene Reynolds

(209) 464-8054

cc: Congressman Richard Pombo
Senator P. Johnston
Assemblyman M. Machado
Delta Protection Commission
San Joaquin County Bd of Supervisors
South Delta Water Agency
Central Delta Water Agency
L. Snow, CALFED

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