



**CALFED  
BAY-DELTA  
PROGRAM**

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October 5, 1999

Ms. Arlene Wong, et al  
Pacific Institute for Studies in Development  
Environment, and Security  
854 13<sup>th</sup> Street  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Ms. Wong:

I am writing in response to the letter you and 33 environmental justice organizations sent on June 23, 1999, to Secretary of the Interior Babbitt and Governor Davis regarding CALFED's obligations and commitments to address issues of environmental justice in its overall program. First, let me take this opportunity to thank those of you who met with me and other members of the CALFED agencies on September 10, 1999, in Oakland to discuss some of your environmental justice concerns directly. I have attached a memo describing the outcomes of that meeting for your review.

In your letter, you raised a number of important issues and made three specific requests, to which I will respond here. Specifically, you requested that CALFED:

- (1) Identify and address Environmental Justice issues in the CALFED Program in cooperation with community-based organizations;
- (2) Appoint representatives from Environmental Justice organizations to CALFED advisory and governance bodies; and
- (3) Create an Environmental Justice grants program.

**(1) Identifying Environmental Justice Issues and Impacts**

As part of completion of its programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Report (EIS/R), required under federal and state law, CALFED staff has done this analysis (see attached excerpt from the draft programmatic EIS/R, especially page 7.14-11). This analysis revealed that at a programmatic level, the CALFED Program could have adverse impacts on rural farmworkers. We recognize that greater effort must be made to identify other potential environmental justice issues. However, since the CALFED Program is complex and broad in scope, and will be implemented in stages over thirty years, the specific impacts you suggested be assessed cannot be fully considered until specific projects or actions are proposed. We anticipate that project-level environmental assessments will commence in mid-2000, after the Program EIS/R is finalized and the Record of Decision has been signed. As we discussed at our meeting on September 10, we welcome greater

**CALFED Agencies**

**California** The Resources Agency  
Department of Fish and Game  
Department of Water Resources  
California Environmental Protection Agency  
State Water Resources Control Board  
Department of Food and Agriculture

**Federal** Environmental Protection Agency  
Department of the Interior  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Bureau of Land Management  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
U.S. Forest Service  
Department of Commerce  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Western Area Power Administration



participation of environmental justice organizations in assessing potential environmental justice impacts at the project level.

However, let me emphasize that while the CALFED Program is very broad in its scope, many of the specific concerns raised in your letter pertain to specific policies or actions that are taken at the local or regional level. For instance, the CALFED Program has no direct impact on urban or agricultural water district rate-setting. While the CALFED Water Use Efficiency Program will set clear policy direction and support funding of types of conservation actions, the actual water conservation decisions made by a specific ag or urban water district are made at the local level. That said, to the extent possible, over the next thirty years the CALFED Program will be promoting aggressive integration of water quality, environmental restoration and water conservation actions at the regional level. This kind of integration is the heart of the CALFED Program.

**(2) Appoint Environmental Justice Representatives to CALFED Advisory and Governing Bodies**

In your June 23 letter you also suggested steps that the Program should undertake as soon as possible to help integrate environmental justice concerns into the Program. You requested that CALFED expand its advisory and governance bodies to include representatives from environmental justice organizations. At our meeting on September 10, we discussed this issue. At that time, we committed to exploring addition of environmental justice representatives to the Bay Delta Advisory Council, which is the principal public advisory body to the CALFED Program. Participants at that meeting committed to doing a search for representatives who may be interested in serving on an advisory group. Since BDAC is an official Federal Advisory Committee under federal charter, the final decision for adding members to BDAC is made by the Secretary of the Interior in consultation with the Governor. We will keep you apprised of our progress in these efforts.

In addition to BDAC participation, at the September 10, meeting we discussed how to begin to expand environmental justice participation in specific CALFED programs. One obvious place to begin is in the CALFED Watershed Program. We will be taking steps to ensure participation of urban watershed organizations in our program. We have committed, and I have directed our staff, to hold one of the upcoming meetings of the BDAC Watershed Program Work Group in the Bay area. John Lowrie, Watershed Program Manager, has already taken steps to hold the November meeting of the Watershed Work Group in the Bay area. In addition, we will be taking other steps to elevate urban watershed concerns in the Watershed Program, including holding a workshop or workshops on urban watershed issues, particularly as they pertain to the health of San Francisco Bay (this would be consistent with other Watershed Program work group meetings).

Participation of urban watershed organizations and councils in the CALFED Watershed Program is a good starting point for increased involvement of community-based environmental justice organizations within CALFED. I am confident that as the CALFED Program moves from a planning effort to an actual program that, with your assistance, we

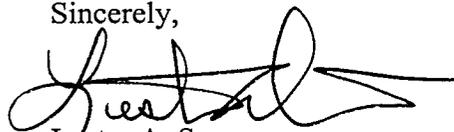
will continue to develop other avenues for ongoing environmental justice organization participation.

**(3) Create an Environmental Justice Grants Program**

The third request you made in your letter was that the CALFED Program set aside 10% of its grant monies and create an environmental justice grants program. We encourage your organizations to apply for funding in response to upcoming solicitations. Although we are uncertain of our FY 2000 budget, we expect to have money to continue implementation of the ecosystem restoration program, as well as to begin work on other CALFED programs, including the Water Quality Program and the Water Use Efficiency Program.

In closing, let me thank you again for the opportunity to meet with some of you on September 10th . I look forward to continuing to work through the important issues of environmental equity and sustainability with your participation.

Sincerely,



Lester A. Snow  
Executive Director

Enclosures

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