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TO: Steve Yaeger, Deputy Director, CALFED Bay Delta Program

FROM: Eugenia Laychak (E)

SUBJECT: Draft Coordination and Communication Framework for the PCT and Related Technical Teams

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PURPOSE

CCPDR was asked to propose a framework for improving communication and accountability between the PCT, Program staff and technical teams to help the CALFED agencies agree on a preferred San Francisco Bay Delta solution and certify the related EIR/S.

PCT meetings are venues where Program staff present updates on Program Team progress, major issues raised at BDAC and management team meetings, public workshops, and other events. This exchange of information contributes to PCT understanding of the Program and should continue. However, Program staff has an incredible burden for ensuring the communication happens as it should. That burden has significantly increased with the creation of technical teams and BDAC work groups and will likely increase to overwhelming proportions in Phase II.

The proposed framework recommends actions or approaches:

- for improving the information exchange process,
- tightening up information flow between the PCT, technical teams and the rest of the Program Team, and
- transferring some of the communication responsibility from Program staff to the PCT and technical teams.

After the framework is finalized, a specific strategy can be developed and implemented to meet the needs of Program staff and agency teams.

BACKGROUND

CALFED workshop packets and publications mention that the process is one of consensus building and collaboration. Collaborative decision-making involves many

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steps and attention to detail. It requires clearly articulating how decisions are made and the role of participants in making decisions or building agreements. A collaborative process also requires clear and consistent communication between key participants and their constituents. Orderly and timely communication keeps people informed of progress made in developing the solution. People are more likely to accept a troublesome solution if they clearly understand how it was developed, they participated in the process, and they perceive the process as fair. The consequences of CALFED participants not clearly understanding the decision making process and not being in the information or communication loop will be dissatisfaction with the process and resistance to accepting a solution.

Generally, in most collaborative public decision making processes, design of a communication strategy occurs before group discussions on substantive issues begins, and after an assessment of the problem or conflict, including analysis of interested party concerns, is conducted (see attachment A). To account for addressing communication issues out of sequence, the following framework is designed to adjust to new concerns that may be revealed as Phase II proceeds or if an agency assessment is conducted. It also recommends a few, necessary tasks that would normally be accomplished in the early stages of a process.

INFORMATION SOURCES

We based our framework on the following information:

- program work plans and other documents, including PCT materials and
- personal experience from working with the Program since February 1996.

ASSUMPTIONS USED TO DEVELOP THE FRAMEWORK:

- The CALFED Bay Delta Program needs the "buy in" or agreement from the CALFED agencies on the preferred solution and support for certifying the EIR/S.
- It is not enough that the CALFED decision makers (CALFED Policy Group) reach agreement. The important point is that the agency technical and policy staffs back up the agreements and thus, be involved in creating the preferred solution, assessing the impacts and developing mitigation. In short, agency decision makers and as many staff as possible must take ownership of the EIR/S.
- The technical and policy portions of the Program must be strategically integrated in order for the agreements to last and to be comprehensive.
- The PCT and Program staff are the "hubs" of agency activity on the CALFED Program. They receive guidance from the CALFED Policy Group and Management Team. They receive advice from other public officials, BDAC and other stakeholders.
- PCT "membership" includes mid-level policy and technical managers from each of the CALFED agencies. Often, more than one person from an agency attends the meetings. The group meets monthly to be briefed by Program staff on the past month's activities and provide advice or guidance to the Program staff and technical teams on major issues or Program milestones.
- Technical teams were formed to conduct fact-finding and related technical analysis on specific topics for Phase II Component Refinement. Their meeting schedules vary, depending on the individual group or team.
- Technical team leaders are either Program Staff, consultants, or CALFED agency staff.

Consultants may be replaced by agency staff to encourage increased agency participation and "buy-in."

- Policy related fact-finding and analysis on specific issues is generally conducted by BDAC work groups.
- In some cases work group and technical team issues and discussions overlap. For example, technical teams and Work Groups will have issues that will be addressed by the "cross cutting" Assurances and Finance Work Groups.

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

The purpose of the proposed framework is to facilitate communication between the PCT and technical teams and increase participant accountability to the CALFED process. A framework for the CALFED process should be flexible to accommodate different agency decision-making processes, but be clearly structured so that team leaders, regardless of their affiliation, will follow the established protocols and lead their teams in developing recommendations or options that are consistent with the CALFED mission.

Following development of the framework, design of a strategy that all participants can follow is especially important to minimize "late hits" on issues and ensure that all issues are addressed by the right people. In addition, agreement to the strategy by team members will transfer some of the responsibility for follow-through from Program staff to the teams.

The rest of this memo lays out factors to be considered when developing a detailed strategy. Under each factor is a short discussion followed by recommendations.

Agency Dynamics

Discussion

This factor addresses agency staff and representative views on issues. It is important that each agency develop general goals that bind people together with separate views on the CALFED Program. Development of goals will help an agency speak to CALFED with one voice.

Recommendations

- Ask staff, consultants, and technical team members who work on CALFED issues to develop internal agency general goal(s) that they can all agree with and stick to. Encourage CALFED management team and policy group representatives to participate in development of the goals.
- It was suggested that the PCT adopt a mission statement. This is an excellent way to articulate the central purpose or goal of the group. The statement should complement, but not overlap, the CALFED Program mission statement or statements adopted by other CALFED groups.
- To reinforce the concept of collaborative agreement building, the statement can include a

sentence or two on protocols for conducting discussions or building agreements. For example, language can state that representatives agree to operate in a spirit of understanding and that discussions are opportunities to learn from each other.

Agency Participants and Team Roles

Discussion

Since the PCT and technical teams have been formed, it may be inappropriate to conduct a detailed assessment to determine whether the most appropriate people are representing their agencies. On the other hand, since the Program is transitioning into Phase II and developing work plans, if discussions would benefit from clarification of roles or changes in team(s) membership, this may be an appropriate time to initiate those changes.

Recommendations

- In cases where the authority to make decisions or discuss issues is unclear, clarify the representative's role, taking into consideration the representatives skills and communication abilities, meeting procedures, and issues or discussion topics.
- If the group would be better served by having another representative, work with the agency to replace the person or add someone to the team meetings.

Communication

Discussion

Attachment B depicts the CALFED groups which participate in developing the preferred Bay Delta solution. The attachment shows the PCT as the key group which oversees the work of the technical teams. The PCT and technical teams are also responsible to the Program team, and CALFED as a whole. The following recommendations build on this organizational structure.

Recommendation

- Task PCT members with reporting back to their respective technical team members and other staff working on CALFED issues. In turn, schedule time at PCT meetings for members to report back any feedback from their respective staffs.

Previous suggestions from PCT members, including distributing meeting summaries at PCT and other meetings and providing information over e-mail will help keep people up-to-date. Implementing the "feedback" strategy described above will encourage "side" conversations between meetings to discuss major outcomes and implications for their areas of responsibility. For especially critical issues, invite representatives to present the topic at a pertinent PCT or technical team meeting.

- Follow this feedback mechanism for technical teams and the PCT subgroup, when appropriate. Suggest that when summarizing results of each meeting, the groups highlight issues or recommendations that need PCT or other group discussion and guidance.
- I was happy to hear that Michelle Wong will help coordinate meetings and be responsible for distributing team meeting summaries and coordinating other team tasks. With so many meetings, coordinating scheduling of different team meetings and activities may be difficult, but ask Michelle or the technical teams to try to schedule meetings far enough apart for team members to review materials, brief their staffs, and respond to the team(s) concerns.
- A coordinator can also help keep BDAC work group liaisons and technical team leaders aware of major discussions and milestones of the different groups. This type of coordination is especially important for the groups, such as Assurances and Financial Strategies, which will address issues from most, if not all, of the technical teams and Work Groups.

Decision making

Discussion

Developing recommendations or options in team meetings using collaborative techniques can help build agreements that may well lead to "buy in" on a Bay Delta solution. However, the process for developing the recommendations and options must be clearly understood by participants and should take into account the different decision making processes within agencies. For example, an agency with a governing board, such as SWRCB, or Fish and Game Commission, may have different scheduling needs than an agency headed by a director.

Recommendations

- Make sure everyone understands how a team will reach agreements.
- Make sure the teams understand internal reporting and decision-making requirements within each agency.
- Consider changing a decision-making method if it conflicts with or can not be adhered to by an agency.

Other Influential Agencies and Groups

Discussion

The EIR/S schedule, for example, calls for certifications or approvals by BCDC, State Lands Commission, and the State Historical Preservation Office.

Recommendation

- A PCT task (shared with the Program staff) may be to ensure effective coordination with these agencies, during appropriate times in Phase II, so that the approval process proceeds with a minimum number of glitches.

Personal Risk

Discussion

Without engaging in discussions with agency representatives, it is not known whether this factor is currently an issue. Regardless of the current situation, as negotiations progress and stakes become higher, some representatives may be threatened, especially if they appear, to be "caving" in.

Recommendations

- Work with PCT and technical team members to not only keep agency staffs informed of CALFED progress, but also the context in which adjustments in positions and agreements have been made.
- Representatives should ensure they have the support of their managers in anticipation of dealing with the possibility of outside interference in the internal affairs of the agency.

NEXT STEPS

I suggest that after you and possibly other staff review the proposed framework we discuss it to make sure it properly addresses Program concerns about PCT and technical team coordination and communication. If you wish, CCPDR can propose a process for implementing these recommendations to reduce the burden on the Program but will ensure the strategy will address agency needs. The process could be designed to make sure:

- ▶ everyone who needs to be involved is involved,
- ▶ the decision making or agreement building process is appropriate and clearly understood by the participants, and
- ▶ agreement builders are fully apprised of technical and policy issues necessary to reach necessary agreements.