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Opening Statement

of

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Mr. Chairman and fellow Council members:

It is a pleasure for me to be here today at this inaugural meeting of the Bay Delta Advisory Council. I am grateful both to Secretary of the Interior Babbitt and to Governor Wilson for my having been given this opportunity to serve our nation and our state.

Nearly a decade ago, Science magazine published a cover story entitled "The Modification of an Estuary". In that story, the authors analyzed the formidable obstacles facing those of us whose mission it is to protect the San Francisco Bay/Delta estuary from a myriad of problems caused by our society's economic development, both urban and agricultural. In the intervening years, however, there have been several public actions which have given the estuary's protectors some reason for optimism. Most notable among these actions have been:

- (1) Congressional passage of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act of 1992; and
- (2) the joint adoption of the San Francisco Bay/Delta Accord by the federal and state governments and various "stakeholders" on December 15, 1994.

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As we begin this new long-range planning effort for the future of the estuary, there are two essential points which I would like to emphasize:

(1) Any recommendations which emerge from the "CalFed" process and from this Advisory Council should shoot high: ecosystem restoration should be the overall environmental objective we seek to meet; and

(2) The integrity of the CVPIA and of the Bay/Delta Accord must be maintained.

Unfortunately, there are several recent developments which threaten to undermine both of these objectives almost before we have begun our new enterprise.

First, and most troubling, are the efforts of a number of Central Valley Project contractors, consultants, and lobbyists both to dismantle the CVPIA and to "take over" the CVP from federal ownership and control. These efforts seek to reorient the CVP without any credible consideration of the public environmental and myriad other interests that will be impacted by such proposals. Moreover, contrary to the position being taken by these interests that there is no "linkage" between CVP "reform" and the Bay/Delta Accord, it is necessary to point out that the CVPIA is recognized both in the Bay/Delta Accord and in the State Water Resources Control Board's recent water quality plan as a crucial building block for the protection of the estuary. So let us be clear at the outset: if the CVPIA is undermined, the Bay/Delta Accord and this long-term planning process will be undermined as well.

Second is the formation of a group calling itself the Delta Restoration Coalition. The Delta Restoration Coalition consists overwhelmingly of large agribusiness operators in the San Joaquin Valley (along with a few southern Californians), whose apparent purpose is to sponsor an initiative in 1996 that would authorize the construction of a Peripheral Canal. Like the various efforts now underway in Washington, D.C. to avoid the ecosystem restoration

mandates in the CVPIA, if the Coalition's approach prevails, the hard-won consensus among the State's major water interests, developed in the Bay/Delta Accord process and necessary for this planning effort to succeed, will be blown apart.

Notwithstanding these troubling developments, we must all hope that, upon further reflection, all parties of interest will reconsider their positions and reaffirm their commitment to the consensus-based efforts that made the December 1994 Accord unprecedented in the long history of California water conflicts. As my departed colleague, John Krautkraemer, recognized at the time, however, the Accord was not just an end in itself, but a possible "beginning" of something very important.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for affording me the opportunity to state these opening views. I look forward to working with you and all the Council members. The consensus approach has worked best in the past. Let us try to make it work again here as well.