

BAY-DELTA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, December 6, 1995
Beverly Garland Hotel, Sacramento, CA

BDAC

1. Welcome and Introductions

Bay-Delta Advisory Council (BDAC) members were welcomed to the fourth BDAC meeting by Chairperson Mike Madigan, and Vice-Chairperson Sunne McPeak. Mike Madigan thanked BDAC members who had attended the December public workshops held earlier in the week and encouraged BDAC members to attend as many of the public workshops and public meetings as they could. He encouraged public comment during the meeting, at the appropriate time, and during the public comment period. Twenty-eight BDAC members were present at the meeting with (Dan Fults, Bureau of Reclamation, replacing Roger Patterson for the meeting) (Attachment 1) and 34 members of the public (Attachment 2).

2. Review of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program Process

a. Review of the Phase I Process

Lester Snow provided a brief presentation reviewing the progress and status of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. The presentation focused on reviewing the progress that has been made in Phase I and emphasizing where the process is in the overall schedule. Phase I of the process will be complete by May 1996 and will culminate with a public report identifying the alternatives to be carried forward into the EIS/EIR process. Phase II will commence in June 1996 and continue through June 1998.

b. Preparation for the Phase II Process

Rick Breitenbach gave an overview of the Phase II process in which we will be preparing the programmatic environmental document. The Program will actually begin conducting some of the Phase II activities in Phase I so that we will be able to meet the time frame described in the overall schedule. Comments from BDAC members focused on ensuring that the impact analysis is coupled with the economic consequences; ensuring that the alternatives will be presented to BDAC members with specifics enough to elicit meaningful comments; and the need for another BDAC meeting in March to be able to provide those comments in a timely fashion. The BDAC meeting in March will provide the opportunity for BDAC members to thoroughly discuss the proposed range of alternatives and to have the benefit of the results from the late February public workshop.

c. Financial Strategy Discussion

Zach McReynolds gave a presentation outlining the financial strategy for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. Zach also gave a brief update on the Business Roundtable Process which BDAC members heard a presentation about at the October BDAC meeting. The document from this process has undergone some major revisions and should be available soon. The Stakeholders group has also formed a Finance Subcommittee to look at financial options for funding solutions. Zach displayed a benefit matrix which attempts to allocate the benefits of actions into categories of public, common, and private.

Comments from BDAC members focused on obtaining definitions for public, common and private benefits; ensuring that financing options have flexibility to allow for implementation on a shorter time-frame; a discussion about the use of cause allocation versus (or in addition to) benefit allocation; and the difficulties associated with funding restoration activities using methods that have been historically used to fund construction or mitigation actions.

Steve Hall provided a brief overview of the SB 900 hearing at the ACWA conference in Palm Springs. The objective of that hearing was to answer three questions: 1) should SB 900 try to incorporate funding for all activities that may come from the CALFED Bay-Delta long-term program or should it focus on interim activities? 2) should SB 900 address other water related problems in the State, i.e., flood control, water quality, etc? and 3) is a new institution needed? The discussion at ACWA centered around those questions, although they were not definitively answered. Discussion from BDAC members focused on the use of core actions as interim measures; the need to meet with Senator Costa; the need to move more rapidly in the CALFED process; and how existing projects in the early planning stage fit into the process.

Public Comment -Ed Petry - City of Mendota - Mr. Petry gave a brief overview of historical conditions on the San Joaquin River (Mendota Pool). His comments focused on the need of those who benefit from restoration to pay for it.

3. Current Program Activities

a. Alternative Formulation Process

Lester Snow described the alternative formulation process that the CALFED Bay-Delta Program is using to develop alternatives. Discussion from BDAC members focused on how comments from the general public and BDAC were being integrated and how that information may be useful to BDAC members; how demand management could be incorporated into the process; and how the development of alternative water supplies for Delta exporters should be integrated into the solution process. At this point, Jack Foley, MWD, gave a brief overview of the current negotiations between MWD and Nevada.

b&c. Alternative Formulation Strategies and Discussion of Core Actions

Dick Daniel gave an overview of the CALFED public workshop held on Monday, December 4. He discussed the boundary alternative formation process and how the primary conflicts helped us move from the edges to more reasonable alternatives. Workshop participants agreed that fish screening was necessary upstream and in the Delta; habitat restoration was a key element to all alternatives; toxic discharge is a key problem; specific land may need to come out of production to reduce agricultural pollutants; demand management needs to be part of the solution; levees need to be protected; benefits attributed to hatchery production may not be realistic; adaptive management is key; water transfers may provide additional options; storage facilities may be needed to enable water transfers; conjunctive use was necessary; land use changes were needed to reduce subsidence; the impacts of introduced species were substantial; and there was a need for an emergency response system to accommodate large scale levee loss.

Discussion with BDAC members centered on the concern that the baseline include the December Accord provision and the Water Quality Plan adopted by the State Board; the need to deal with ecosystem problems to avoid future Endangered Species listing which limits flexibility within the system; the feasibility of using pricing to promote conservation and demand management; and the use of core actions for all alternatives. Sunne McPeak suggested that the BDAC members rank the proposed list of Actions and Action Categories and designate which they think should be considered for inclusion as Core Actions.

Public Comment

Ed Petry - City of Mendota - Mr. Petry commented on the contaminants that are carried into the San Joaquin River and the effects of those contaminants.

Nat Bingham - Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman's Association - Mr. Bingham commented on the costs associated with implementing the actions. He specifically commented on the fish hatchery system and how it was originally intended to mitigate for lost habitat upstream of the dams. Additionally, those hatcheries were a social contract which in part supports the commercial fishing industry. His concerns were that in trying to fix the hatchery system we may be undoing a previous agreement that one segment of society depends on.

Robert Mott - Consulting Economist - Mr. Mott commented on the fact that we need more specific information, i.e., how much flow do we need to the Bay and how much habitat do we need to make decisions.

BDAC members discussed several other items, including how we ensure that our alternatives meet our objectives through the development of performance measures; and how to get an accurate cost benefit analysis that takes into consideration environmental factors.

4. Upcoming Program Activities

a & b. Alternative Development and Alternative Refinement Process

Steve Yaeger provided an overview of the steps that would be taken to continue development of the alternatives and how they would be further refined using the performance measure and the solution principles. By the next BDAC meeting in February, BDAC members should have a package of a range of 20 to 30 reasonable alternatives. Comments from BDAC members included ensuring that the material comes to them in sufficient time for review and when the actual scoping process will begin.

c. Update -- Public Outreach Activities

Judy Kelly provided a brief update on the public outreach activities that have been occurring. CALFED Bay-Delta Program has conducted two public meetings since mid-October and has been working with BDAC members to ensure that our outreach in certain areas is targeting a large audience.

The BDAC members agreed that BDAC meetings should be held on a monthly basis through the alternative development and evaluation process to ensure timely advice.

5. Public Comment Period

Public comment was taken throughout the meeting.

Meeting adjourned 3:22 p.m.