

CALFED BAY DELTA PROGRAM
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
Since January 1, 1996

Since the start of the year, the Program has sponsored one public meeting in Fresno, the Bay-Delta Advisory Council (BDAC) held a meeting on February 15 and we held the Fifth Workshop on February 26 to begin discussions on the 20 draft alternatives.

Public comment at Fresno, and up to the time of the release of the 20 draft alternatives, continued to follow the general range of comments received prior to the release and was summarized in a memorandum at the last BDAC meeting. Essentially, these comments fell into the following areas: questions and comments regarding the Mission, Problem Statements, Objectives and Solution Principles; Action Descriptions and Categories; Demand Management; and, issues and questions related to the environmental review, such as what will constitute a "baseline" condition for analysis.

Since release of the 20 draft alternatives, comments have become more specific regarding the process of developing and refining alternatives and specific questions regarding the alternatives themselves. As of this writing, we have received over 40 comment letters and facsimiles in response to the draft alternatives contained in the Workshop 5 Information Packet. As would be expected, the range of opinions on these draft 20 alternatives was great; often specific opinions were directly contradicted by other specific opinions (i.e., "Retain large east-side facility for future analysis;" "Eliminate large east-side facility from further consideration"). While it is not possible to summarize in great detail the many comments we received, the following provides a sense of the range of comments received and brief summary statements on many of the most common issues.

Process/Policy

- Include a list of "essential elements."
- Need a "layered" approach to alternatives; phased.
- Core actions lack enough specificity; should be expanded with more restoration actions.
- Need yield and demand forecasts for each alternative.
- Some alternatives not supportable under solution principles.
- Effect of other processes (CVPIA) on Program?
- Area of origin statutes must be honored.
- Cost figures are needed for further evaluation of alternatives.
- Both demand management and ecosystem restoration should be separated out from alternatives and evaluated as programs under the auspices of CALFED Bay-Delta Program--alternatives should be based on potential facilities (range from none to large isolated).
- Assurances are needed as part of the process and should be developed early -- institutional assurances may not be best way of getting assurances.

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- Demand management and assurances are best developed by the stakeholder first, then discussed by broader interests.
- Demand management must recognize actions “already in the pipeline.” i.e., BMP demand management harden demand resulting in less flexibility during critically dry years.
- Need better definition for “real-time monitoring” or adaptive management.

Ecosystem Restoration

- Why have program to benefit non-native species like striped bass?
- Alternatives need more upstream/downstream habitat improvements: and restoration goals are not defined enough; habitat restoration uncertainties exist regarding goals and achievable elements.
- Scale of restoration needs to be more ambitious.
- Increase watershed protection as part of Program.
- Needs more wetlands created upstream and downstream of Delta.

Water Supply

- Look for ways to store more water during times of plenty.
- Fish exist in system at all times; there is no “magic window” where water pumping is not an issue.
- Improving predictability should not be substituted for no additional water; need more yield.
- Not enough supply benefits in some alternatives.
- Demand management needs to be more aggressively part of Program.
- Demand management is necessary and is on-going, but will not supply enough “new water” to be part of separate alternatives--should be core action.
- Conservation should apply to ecosystem uses (refuge water supply) as well as urban and agriculture.
- Land retirement is not a supportable means of supply augmentation--breaches solution principles; too disruptive of the local economies.
- Raise Friant Dam for additional storage.
- Water transfers must be carefully considered--impacts on local economy; should not be a primary method of increasing water supply.
- Too much emphasis on expanding export supplies in alternatives with new facilities.

Water Quality

- Role of toxics unclear.
- More emphasis is needed on urban water quality issues.
- Retaining Delta common pool essential to final alternative.

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- Need an anti-degradation objective.
- Need to see integration of proposed regional projects and how they would fit into alternatives.

System Reliability

- Final alternatives should include the higher PL-99 standards for all levees.
- Alternatives in Category I need more levee improvements.
- Describe what is meant by an “emergency levee management plan.”

Specific Alternative Operational Aspects

We received many specific comments related to operational questions or suggestions for each of the 20 alternatives. These comments were each reviewed and analyzed by staff and consultants and integrated into the revised set of alternatives as appropriate.

Many thoughtful comments are not readily reflected in the refined set of alternatives. After analysis, some of these comments were not found to comport with the intent or design of the specific alternative. Other comments may have included details of alternatives which will be evaluated as we move into further refinement, but are more specific than the current design of the alternatives. Some comments highlighted outstanding policy issues for which we do not have an immediate response, but which will form an issue set for future Program focus.