



CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM

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Date: July 8, 1996
To: BDAC Members
From: Lester A. Snow, Executive Director
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Subject: Framing Advice to CALFED

To finalize the alternatives which will be analyzed in Phase II of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, it is necessary to ensure that several questions are addressed at the upcoming BDAC meeting on July 19, 1996. CALFED staff have attempted to frame these questions in a way that will allow for advice to be transmitted from BDAC to CALFED in a timely and effective manner. Following is a general description of how that advice that will be solicited from BDAC at the meeting. We are looking for concurrence and consensus from BDAC members that the choices that have been made, in progressing toward the completion of Phase I, are appropriate.

We believe the 3 Draft Phase II Alternatives represent a reasonable range of solutions. What adjustment of these 3 alternatives, if any, is needed to address the public interest in solving the problems identified early in the Program?

Previously, the Program narrowed the range of solutions to the Bay-Delta problems to twenty and then ten alternatives. These ten alternatives were the subject of the official NEPA/CEQA Scoping process carried out in April and May, 1996. As a result of this scoping, and a comparison of the ten alternatives to the solution principles, CALFED further refined the alternatives to three.

Most of the important ideas contained in the previous ten alternatives are carried forward into the three, which are structured to present a range of alternatives. In fact, the three alternatives really represent more than three sets of options, because each alternative includes various ranges for storage and conveyance. For example, new storage to improve a large isolated conveyance is included as the top of the range for alternative 3. We believe that presenting the alternatives in this manner is an efficient way to characterize and analyze such a wide range of alternatives.

CALFED Agencies

California

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

Federal

Environmental Protection Agency
Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Reclamation
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service

The Program is developing common programs at fairly extensive levels to address the issues of ecosystem restoration, water quality, system integrity, and water use efficiency. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach and how can we address them as we proceed?

The previous set of ten alternatives discussed in Scoping were structured to include a varying level of effort for many of the Program components characterized as modest, moderate, and extensive. This approach was originally used to provide a wide range of solution alternatives.

The recurring comment heard from scoping is that modest, and probably even moderate levels of effort will not be sufficient to resolve many of the issues involved in several of the Program components, basically, ecosystem restoration, water quality, system integrity and water use efficiency (described as demand management in earlier versions). In essence, the comment was "if you can implement extensive levels of effort, why not do so in all alternatives." In response to these comments, it was determined that the components dealing with ecosystem restoration, water quality, system integrity, and water use efficiency are treated as common programs with the same general level of implementation in all three alternatives. Each common program is composed as a series of actions implemented over time.

One strength of this approach that has been pointed out is that four individual program areas--environmental restoration, water supply, water use efficiency, and system integrity--are addressed in an aggressive, comprehensive manner. Thus, a high level of implementation is likely to provide more effective resolution of conflict and, thus, greater overall program durability. Another strength is that synergistic benefits are more likely to materialize if implementation occurs in a parallel or convergent fashion. One potential weakness of this approach is the expense. Another possible weakness is that if implementation for all four programs does not proceed at a similar rate, there may occur the perception that the equability solution principle is not being fulfilled.

The three alternatives are based on staging of the common program implementation from core to modest, moderate and extensive levels of implementation. Is this a reasonable way to proceed? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach?

All three alternatives include a complex series of actions that will take many years to implement. In Stage I, core actions wrapped into common programs will be implemented.

More complete implementation will be completed in Stages II and III, culminating in complete programs at the end of Stage III.

One strength of this approach is that costs can be spread over time. In addition, this approach provides opportunities for adaptive management, and allows realization of synergistic benefits. For example, benefits to the ecosystem which result in more stable aquatic populations may limit constraints or restrictions on water supply availability. A third benefit is that although some benefits do not show up until implementation in later Stages, the actual planning and design can be completed in Stage I giving some assurance that the action will occur. Likewise, a potential weakness of this approach is that it requires development of a well-crafted set of strong assurances to provide stakeholders with the confidence that implementation will proceed at a fair and steady rate.

In Phase I, substantial workshops, public meetings, BDAC meetings, and other public forums were conducted, as well as providing written outreach material. Has this level of public involvement and outreach been adequate? Are there important groups that are underrepresented?

In Phase I, the Program convened seven workshops, to which about 750 people were invited. We also convened seven scoping meetings, and many other briefings. The Program also placed several articles in publications; while many other articles appeared in newspapers. In all, over 1500 people have participated in CALFED workshops, meetings, and briefings during Phase I. A summary of public involvement activities is attached (Attachment 1).

In most of the public forums, the presentation included a status report on the Program and the evolving alternatives, and comments were solicited on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed solutions. As the alternative refinement process continues, more specific actions will be identified, thus benefiting and affecting new groups of stakeholders. The discussions of assurances/guarantees and funding/financing are also likely to affect groups that have thus far not participated in the CALFED process.

What other policy issues need to be highlighted and addressed in Phase II?

A wide range of issues have been identified which must be addressed during the Phase II alternative refinement process. These include a variety of issues such as: addressing the third party impacts from water transfers; clarifying the conditions under which land retirement is utilized; and establishing some principles to guide the initial formulation of assurances and guarantees. This last question will help to identify those policy areas that BDAC members feel should be emphasized.

Attachment