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23443 S. Hays Road
Manteca, CA 95337
August 29, 1996

Lester Snow, Executive Director
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 9th St., Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Fax (916) 654-9780

Dear Lester:

Thank you for your August 23 response to my August 4 letter. I am disappointed, however, that you did not comment on what was intended to be the main point of my concern.

The programs being developed by staff are necessarily based on implied policy assumptions that have not been enunciated and have not been identified and placed on any BDAC agenda as policy issues for discussion and guidance. This is particularly, but not exclusively, true of the treatment of agriculture.

The earlier proposal to permanently reduce agricultural production in order to make two million acre feet of water available for other uses was clearly a policy issue, but it was never presented as such to the BDAC for conclusive debate. It was largely withdrawn because of a public backlash and not as a result of a conclusive policy discussion by BDAC.

It is still proposed that we "maximize the potential for temporary land fallowing". This proposal for intermittent reduction in the production of food, and the assumption that the industry can fully recover, is again a policy issue. Agriculture already takes a much larger deficit in water supply during water short years than urban domestic or industrial users. The proposal is apparently to further decrease reliability of water supply for producers of food in order to augment reliability for other water users.

The desirability of facilitating water transfers within basins and purposes of use is clear. But the main thrust of the transfer proposals appears to be to transfer water from the production of food to other uses in other basins. This distinction among types of transfer is not made, and there is no comparable effort to promote transfers among residential and other municipal water users. It is difficult to avoid the impression from these and other program proposals that using water to produce food is regarded as an inefficient or non-essential use of water.

Governor Wilson stated that water needs for agriculture, urban, and environmental purposes should receive equal attention.

Has this policy been inadvertently dropped or deliberately dropped, and if so by what authority?

The CALFED program is inconsistent regarding the need to restore a salt balance in the San Joaquin Valley. You say that the drainage issue is not germane to the Bay Delta solution. Yet you propose that the drainage problem should be addressed by taking more land out of production without considering other options. Furthermore, the viability of Delta solutions is influenced by the salt load coming down the San Joaquin River which again has better solutions than taking land out of production. The relation of drainage problems to our program is a policy issue which should be addressed by BDAC.

Your reluctance to address long term water supply needs is understandable. However, the proposed "durability" of the Delta solution is related to the population growth and consequent water demand both for the production of food and for urban use. What is our policy on the proposed duration of our program?

I again urge that these and other underlying policy issues be enunciated and put on the BDAC agendas for conclusive policy discussion.

Thank you for your able and open minded leadership of our program.

Sincerely,



Alex Hildebrand
Fax (209) 825-6180
Phone (209) 823-4166

cc Mike Madigan (619) 231-1765
Sunne McPeak (415) 981-6408
Judith Redmond (916) 756-7857
Mike Sterns (209) 364-6191
David Guy (916) 923-5318
Stuart Pyle (805) 873-9225
Bill Johnston (209) 526-7383
Dan Nelson