

23443 S. Hays Road
Manteca, CA 95337
December 21, 1997

DEC 29 1998

Lester Snow and BDAC Members
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 9th St., Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Lester and Fellow BDAC Members:

Before BDAC adopts the Common Program and chooses among the Alternative Proposals it should directly discuss the effect of these proposals and choices on some contentious issues. We have skirted around these issues by using ambiguous terms. When we allege that all water users will have a more "reliable" supply we avoid admitting that we are deciding that some interests will be able to rely on an increased supply while others can only rely on a decreased supply. The same is true of water quality and of land use. Furthermore, some interests will be "assured" of more protection and some will have less protection.

For example, an isolated canal would assure better water quality for exporters and poorer water quality in the Delta. It would enable more adequate drought year exports south of the Delta at the expense of less inflow to the Delta. It would assure that this shift from inflow to exports would occur because of the parochial interest of the political majority in the urban areas. It would provide these increased export assurances by decreasing the parochial interest of the political majority in preservation of the Delta. The canal is believed to provide somewhat less entrainment of San Joaquin and resident Central Delta fish as compared to Alternative 2. However, it would increase a more serious threat to those same fish because the loss of parochial political interest in protecting the Delta could result in loss of protection of the Delta configuration and of adequate inflow.

The common program also has tradeoffs among interests. For example, it would increase wetlands by decreasing farm lands. It would increase stream flows for fishery, but would decrease the water supply available to grow food for the increased population that is expected within the planning horizon. It would take farm land out of production and continue the salinization of valley soils in order to be able to improve quality in the San Joaquin River without a valley drain.

There is an assumption that it will be in the social interest to free market agricultural water to urban use. This ignores the fact that in many if not most years the entire water yield of the Central Valley is utilized for consumptive purposes in the Valley, plus currently committed exports from the Valley,

plus mandated Delta outflow. A willing seller may, therefore, have control of more water than he needs, but that "excess" water is not excess to the above needs. Unless the water that is sold is water that would otherwise become excess Delta outflow, its sale for a new export or for an increase above currently mandated outflow will at some point in time either reduce the exports that would otherwise occur or reduce the water available for beneficial use on wetlands and farm lands in the valley.

I request that at our January meeting we have a direct, and where possible, quantified discussion of these and other tradeoffs among interests.

Sincerely,


Alex Hildebrand