



Northern California Water Association Principles on the CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Adopted by NCWA's Board of Directors October 29, 1996

In 1994, the State of California and the United States signed a "Framework Agreement" pledging cooperation on a long-term plan to address chronic water supply and environmental problems in the Sacramento - San Joaquin River Delta and San Francisco Bay (Bay-Delta). Consistent with this pledge, urban, agricultural and environmental interests, also in 1994, signed the "Bay-Delta Accord" which established an interim management plan for the Bay-Delta. The Northern California Water Association (NCWA) is a signatory to the 1994 Bay-Delta Accord.

NCWA's participation in the 1994 Bay-Delta Accord reflects our members' historic commitment to environmental stewardship. This commitment has also resulted in improved water quality in the Sacramento River and its tributaries, more efficient water use in the Sacramento Valley, increased protections for fisheries and the establishment of thousands of acres of privately managed habitat for waterfowl and wildlife. Northern California interests have also supported comprehensive state-wide efforts, such as the State Water Project, designed to improve water supply, provide flood control protection, protect groundwater resources and produce other project benefits.

NCWA supports the resolution of environmental problems in the Bay-Delta ecosystem even though we believe that Sacramento Valley water users are not major contributors to the environmental problems of the Bay-Delta. Consistent with this view, NCWA has participated in the CALFED process and supports the current CALFED effort because it is based upon the goal of developing a comprehensive solution to water supply and environmental problems. NCWA intends to utilize the following principles to determine whether to ultimately support the CALFED preferred alternative now under development.

1. The CALFED preferred alternative must adhere strictly to California's water rights priority system. This system has guided water allocation decisions in this state from a time prior to Statehood. The preferred alternative must also adhere strictly to the commitments and policies articulated in state and federal law, regarding the areas of origin. This includes adherence to these commitments and policies as they have been incorporated into various water supply and water diversion contracts.
2. CALFED agencies must recognize that all water supply and environmental issues are not necessarily Delta-related. CALFED should recognize that Sacramento Valley water users do not directly rely upon the Delta for their water supplies and, as a consequence, are not major contributors to the environmental problems in the Bay-Delta.
3. The CALFED preferred alternative must fully address the environmental problems in the Bay-Delta ecosystem. CALFED should recognize that while upstream water users are not major contributors to the environmental problems in the Bay-Delta, protection and enhancement of upstream fish and wildlife habitat on the Sacramento, Feather, and Yuba rivers and their tributaries will assist in resolving Bay-Delta environmental problems. The CALFED preferred alternative should also be consistent with voluntary water management and agricultural production practices that provide associated waterfowl and wildlife benefits.
4. The CALFED preferred alternative must provide for the development of new locally controlled and owned off-stream storage in the Sacramento Valley, (such as the Sites Reservoir project), that will create new yield for upstream needs in recognition of the areas of origin - for urban and agricultural uses, provide flood control benefits and supplement environmental water needs.
5. CALFED should implement water transfer policies consistent with the broader and long-term solution to water supply problems in the Bay-Delta. The policy should recognize that the actual water right holder - the owner of the water right - should determine the disposition of the water to be transferred. These guidelines should also ensure that a transfer will not cause unreasonable community, financial, water supply, operational or environmental impacts. Transfer proposals

that would result in degradation of groundwater quality, or the overdraft of the safe yield of affected groundwater basins should be restricted. Transfers in accord with these policies should be deemed a beneficial use of water, including the transfer of water made possible through conservation or efficient water management practices.

6. The CALFED preferred alternative should encourage overall water management as a means to better facilitate the development of water supplies. Traditional concepts of water conservation will have limited success in the Sacramento Valley in developing new water sources. The amount of water applied to farmland that is not consumptively used in this region already returns to surface or groundwater sources and provides numerous beneficial uses, in addition to its primary agricultural use. The CALFED preferred alternative must focus on water use management through region-specific plans that take into consideration such factors as surface and groundwater quality and quantity, soil quality and type, cultural practices and economic and environmental benefits.
7. The CALFED preferred alternative must provide adequate financing and insure state and federal support for the implementation of a coordinated fish screening and fish passage program. This program should be implemented both upstream and in the Bay-Delta. The program should prioritize expenditures and implementation based upon criteria that will result in the greatest measurable benefit to the fishery.
8. The CALFED preferred alternative must provide certainty that agreed upon project facilities and their operations will not be limited or otherwise prohibited based upon future regulatory determinations. The CALFED preferred alternative must include assurances that water users will be protected from future regulatory actions, regardless of their source.
9. The CALFED financial plan should be based upon a comprehensive program that includes significant financial commitments from state and federal agencies. CALFED should initially focus on the redirection or revised management of state and federal programs related to CALFED's goals. Program elements that provide broad public benefits should be funded by

state and federal agencies and through new appropriations. Specific projects should be cost-shared wherever feasible. Water suppliers that contribute to the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Restoration Fund, or to a specific project identified or recognized in the Category III or CALFED program, should receive credit against any potential future financial obligation. New fee or contribution requirements must sunset so that funds are recovered only for the specific purposes and duration intended. There should be no tax or fee associated with the use or ownership of water.

10. The CALFED preferred alternative should support continuing agricultural activities on farmland. There should be no unilateral governmental action which restricts or otherwise dictates how private property shall be farmed. CALFED plans that recommend the purchase of farmland or fallowing are less desirable than locally developed options.
11. The CALFED preferred alternative must be consistent with the six solution principles established by CALFED (Reduce conflicts in the system, be equitable, be affordable, be durable, be implementable, and have no significant redirected impacts). CALFED must carefully evaluate each of the three conveyance options, currently under review, based upon a reasonable range of capacities and the solution principles.