

**Bundled
Stage I
Actions**



Memorandum

Date: October 21, 1998

To: BDAC Members

From: Lester A. Snow, Executive Director
CALFED Bay-Delta Program

Re: Improving Water Supply Reliability through Bundled Stage I Actions

Introduction

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is developing a long-range plan to solve the ecological and water management problems surrounding the Bay-Delta system. The draft preferred alternative, still under development, includes a broad array of actions to improve ecosystem health, water supply reliability, water quality, and levee system integrity. The focus of this discussion paper is on the water supply reliability problem area and how Stage I actions should be combined to achieve significant improvements in this area.

California's water supply reliability depends upon its climate and geography, which exhibit dramatic seasonal, annual, and spatial variations in precipitation and runoff. As a result, California's history records numerous, often complex conflicts over water. These conflicts are intensified by population growth, changes in social priorities, deterioration of the ecosystem from a variety of causes, possible global climatic changes, and other trends. Available information, including the well-documented experience of water users in California's recent droughts, clearly demonstrates that the Bay-Delta system suffers from the impacts of severe water shortage during droughts, with resultant impacts on ecosystem health and water users. CALFED's water management strategy seeks to reduce the impacts and conflicts in a fair and reasonable manner and to make optimal use of existing and proposed facilities. It seeks to maximize operational flexibility by full use of a wide range of water management tools, recognizing that water management issues will become more complex and challenging in the future.

CALFED's preliminary conclusion is that in order to improve water supply reliability while meeting the ecological needs of the Bay-Delta system it will be necessary to

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Department of Fish and Game
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California Environmental Protection Agency
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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service

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take advantage of the multiple reinforcing benefits of all practical water management tools, including water use efficiency measures, water transfers, water quality improvement measures, watershed management measures, and additional system storage.

In the September 10-11 meeting, BDAC members had the opportunity to discuss the proposed language defining the conditional decision structure for the storage and conveyance components of the draft CALFED preferred alternative. The comments on conditions for new storage provided by BDAC members reflected the feedback from the stakeholder community as a whole, with viewpoints, which ranged from:

- All water supply reliability tools, including new surface storage, should be implemented concurrently, resulting in a broad range of actions in Stage I; to
- New surface storage should only proceed after the need for new facilities has been more clearly demonstrated and other water management tools such as water use efficiency, water transfer, and water quality improvement tools have been fully implemented.

While very helpful, this discussion also suggested that the storage issue might be receiving undue emphasis, at the expense of advancing the broader goal of achieving improved water supply reliability for ecosystem and water user benefits. Accordingly, the current discussion focuses on formulation of a bundle that includes a broad range of specific Stage I actions that could provide an acceptable level of progress in water supply reliability.

The concept of "bundling" actions to achieve a specific objective includes identifying the specific actions to be included, the functional mechanism for assuring that the actions proceed concurrently to completion as proposed, and mechanisms for minimizing the risk of blocking implementation of the bundled actions.

A proposed set of water supply reliability improvement actions has been extracted from the Stage I Actions list and is attached. CALFED is seeking BDAC responses to the following questions:

- Is the proposed water supply reliability bundle for Stage I actions well balanced and complete? If not, what modifications are recommended?
- What mechanisms should be used to assure that the bundled actions proceed together?
- What mechanisms should be employed to minimize creation of inadvertent obstacles to implementation of the bundle?