98-251
SEP 28 1998

23443 S. Hays Road
Manteca, CA 95337
September 26, 1998

Senator Maurice Johannessen
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Johannesen:

Thank you for your September 21 letter in which you inquired about difficulty we have experienced in getting CALFED staff to redesign the through Delta conveyance proposal. The purpose of the redesign was to improve export water quality, reduce the flow of Sacramento fish through Georgiana Slough, and reduce the seismic risk to water conveyance.

CALFED currently proposes to prejudge that if the through Delta plan does not meet CALFED's loosely defined objectives, a peripheral canal will be assumed to be the solution to whatever problems then exist, and an undefined entity would then authorize construction of the canal. The problem is that if these "triggers" for canal construction are adopted, the proponents of the canal can cause the "triggers" to be tripped.

We suggested a long time ago that CALFED should examine a redesign which would (a) reduce or eliminate the flow of fish and water through Georgiana Slough and (b) should guide the crossflow to the export pumps so that it would flow down the south fork of the Mokelumne channels (instead of the north fork) and would then come down eastside Delta channels until it crossed to the pumps. Lester Snow agreed to analyze this proposal. The staff recently released a report which purported to analyze the proposal, and which asserted that there would be no improvement in export water quality. Since this was illogical, I met with the staff. What they had done was to bring half the crossflow along the eastside as proposed and then cancelled the benefit by forcing the other half to flow through the western Delta! They stated that unidentified fish experts on the staff had objected to analyzing our proposal for vaguely stated reasons. They stated that they did not, therefore, intend to analyze it.

Obviously this corroborates our belief that any approval of "triggers" which would authorize a canal would ensure that the through Delta alternative would not be optimized or deemed a success. Approval of the "triggers" would therefore be tantamount to approval of the canal. The justification for a canal can obviously be reconsidered at any time, but a decision to build it should not be disguised by the adoption of "triggers".

Thank you for your interest in seeing that the CALFED plan is improved so that it does not become too contentious to gain support.

Another very contentious issue is the apparent abandonment of the Governor's initial clearly stated assurance that urban, environmental, and agricultural needs would get better together. There is no evidence that agriculture will get better. There is no commitment to include viable proposals that would significantly increase overall water supply. In the absence of adequate supply the water will be taken from agriculture.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Alex Hildebrand

Alex Hildebrand

cc with Johannessen letter
Lester Snow
Sunne McPeak
Mike Machado
John Herrick