



July 26, 1999

Dear Tribal Leaders,

Valentino Jack,
Tribal Chairman

Anthony Jack,
Tribal Vice Chairman

Tina Ramos,
Tribal Secretary

Priscilla Ballente,
Tribal Treasurer

I am writing to inform you that I have been appointed by the Department of Interior to serve as a representative for the Tribal Caucus of the Regional Tribal Operations Committee (RTOC) on the Bay-Delta Advisory Council (BDAC). At the May RTOC meeting I was nominated by the Tribal Caucus to the appointment of BDAC based on my involvement in watershed programs. I am the Environmental Coordinator for the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians in Lakeport, California. The Bay Delta Advisory Council is made of citizens with technical expertise in the field of water resources and has the task of providing advisement to the 15 federal and state agencies involved in the Cal Fed Bay Delta Program. My experience in scientific studies and environmental education programs will enable me to aid in the advisement of the Cal Fed agencies. Working in the environmental programs at Big Valley Rancheria has exposed me to the concerns and goals of many of the local Tribal leaders. In addition to my work in the Clear Lake watershed, I participate on the Regional Tribal Operations Committee (RTOC) as the Central California representative to the Tribes. The RTOC is a forum for exchange of information affecting Tribes in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Region 9. RTOC is a voluntary partnership between Tribal leaders and EPA to advance environmental quality and to protect the natural resources in Indian country.

I can assist Tribes in obtaining information on the Cal Fed Bay Delta Program and the interpretation of the associated technical reports. I have made it clear to the agencies involved that I am only representing the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians and that the agencies involved are required to directly consult with all Tribes. However, I can assist Tribes in getting their voices heard. As a BDAC member, I can set BDAC agenda items, submit letters from Tribes to be included in the committee's minutes, and communicate the concerns of a Tribe at the request of the Tribal Leaders.

I want to take this opportunity to inform you on the statements I have made on behalf of the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians. On June 22, I met with Lester Snow, Executive Director, and Kate Hansel, Assistant Director, Policy Development, and stated that the Cal Fed agency is required to immediately consult with all Tribes. Also, that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the program needed to be sent to all Tribes. I voiced the interest of Big Valley in having direct access to the funding available to watershed restoration projects and that the Tribal Leaders of Big Valley Rancheria did not want the Tribe's existing funding under the EPA's Clean Water Act programs to be spread even thinner to cover the costs of involvement in the Cal Fed Bay Delta Program. New or existing, but not utilized, funding sources should be promoted by Cal Fed staff to support Tribal involvement. I requested assistance in coordinating a Tribal workshop where technical experts could present aspects of the program and Tribes could ask questions regarding the recently released EIS. The goal of the workshop would be to assist Tribes in developing comments on their concerns and interests in the Cal Fed Bay Delta Program

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Upon being introduced at the July 9th BDAC meeting as a new member, I stated that I only represented the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians and that with my involvement on RTOC, I could assist in communicating information to Tribes. I informed the BDAC members that the Framework Agreement that formed the Cal Fed Bay Delta program included 15 entities with regulatory and management responsibilities in the Bay Delta and its watershed, but had excluded the almost twice that number of Tribes within the direct watershed. Each individual Tribe is a sovereign nation with regulatory and management responsibilities. I stated that the 1994 Executive Order for Government to Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments requires the direct consultation with all Tribes on these matters. I suggested that when conducting this consultation, that the elected leaders of the federal and state governments participate and meet with Tribal leaders to discuss the activities of the Cal Fed agencies. In closing, I stated that the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians wants to see the involvement of Tribes in the governance of the Cal Fed Program, direct access to the Policy Group as required by the Executive Order, and has interests in inclusion in the Framework Agreement.

I will continue to provide information to all Tribes on the ongoing activities of the Cal Fed Bay Delta Program. However, please call Lester Snow or Valerie Holcomb, Public Affairs Director, of the Cal Fed Bay Delta Program to voice your concerns and interests directly for your Tribe at (916) 654-6163, as well as letting them know that your Tribe is interested in being an active participant on the BDAC. Written comments to the EIS should be sent to the Cal Fed Bay Delta Program, 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155, Sacramento, CA 95814; attention Rick Breitenbach, by September 23, 1999.

Alf Brandt, Assistant Regional Solicitor, U.S. Department of Interior, is assisting in the consultation with Tribes and can be reached at (916) 978-5686. Mr. Brandt will be in contact with all the Tribes located within the State of California regarding the consultation meeting scheduled for September 2 in San Francisco. The long-term governance of Cal Fed will be determined shortly and may impact Tribal sovereignty and the available water resource management funding for years to come if not inclusive of the Tribes in the region. I have attached the governance workgroup schedule and funded ecosystem restoration projects of 1999. I can be contacted at the Big Valley Rancheria Tribal Office, (707) 263-3924 ex 24, regarding any concerns or interests you may have on this or other environmental programs. The Tribes need to act now and secure their influence in the future water management of the region.

Sincerely,



Mike Schaver
Environmental Coordinator, Big Valley Rancheria
Central California Representative, Regional Tribal Operation Committee

cc: Tribal Environmental Staff
William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America
Al Gore, Vice President of the United States of America
Felicia Marcus, Regional Administrator, U.S. EPA