

# Executive Director's Report



**M e m o r a n d u m**

Date: May 9, 2000  
 To: Bay-Delta Advisory Council  
 From: Steven R. Ritchie  
 Acting Executive Director  
 Subject: Executive Director's Report

The purpose of this report is to keep you and the public up-to-date on the CALFED Bay-Delta Program and related activities.

**Recent Developments**

**1. Legislative Update.**

Since my last report, both the State Legislature and Congress recessed for district work activities and reconvened for continuation of legislative business.

On April 12, 2000, the State Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Resources (Assemblywoman Strom-Martin, chair) acted on two state agency budgets related to the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. In Department of Water Resources' (DWR) budget, the subcommittee adopted language expressing the Legislature's intent that future budgets contain a table displaying proposals for all related activities. The subcommittee also adopted language detailing the purposes of the appropriation for the CALFED Integrated Storage Investigation. The subcommittee approved requested funding for CALFED support, water acquisitions, use of federal funds for ecosystem restoration, the CALFED agricultural water conservation program, and for CALFED San Joaquin River studies for salmon, habitat, and river restoration. In the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) budget, the subcommittee approved requested funding for CALFED implementation.

On April 25, Patrick Wright of Resources Agency and I appeared before the State Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife (Assemblyman Machado, Chair) for an informational presentation to the Committee on the status of the State-federal discussions. On the same date, the State Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife passed AB 1839

**CALFED Agencies**

**California** The Resources Agency  
 Department of Fish and Game  
 Department of Water Resources  
 California Environmental Protection Agency  
 State Water Resources Control Board  
 Department of Food and Agriculture

**Federal** Environmental Protection Agency  
 Department of the Interior  
 Fish and Wildlife Service  
 Bureau of Reclamation  
 U.S. Geological Survey  
 Bureau of Land Management  
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture  
 Natural Resources Conservation Service  
 U.S. Forest Service  
 Department of Commerce  
 National Marine Fisheries Service  
 Western Area Power Administration

(Machado, Dickerson) California Bay-Delta Commission. This bill is co-authored by Assembly Members Aanestad, Strom-Martin, and Thomson and would create a nine-member California Bay-Delta Commission.

On April 26, the State Senate Budget Subcommittee on Resources, Environmental Protection, Judiciary, and Transportation (Senator Sher, Chair) acted on unfinished business regarding several state agency budgets related to the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. In Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) budget, the subcommittee approved requested funding, with several augmentations and subject to supplemental report language calling for a series of reports. In DWR's budget, the subcommittee approved funding for the Vernalis Adaptive Management Plan. The subcommittee voted to deny requested funding for water acquisitions. In Resources Agency's budget, the subcommittee voted to add \$1.5 million for a report on the suitability of decommissioning dams, diversions, and other impoundment facilities to restore access to spawning habitat for salmon and steelhead fisheries.

On May 2, the State Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review (Senator Peace, Chair) approved the Senate version of the budget bill.

On May 9, Patrick Wright and I are scheduled to appear before the State Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife for an informational presentation to the Committee on the status of the state-federal discussions.

On May 10, the State Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Resources is scheduled to meet to address unfinished business on several state agency budgets.

On May 17, the State Senate Budget Subcommittee on Resources, Environmental Protection, Judiciary, and Transportation is scheduled to meet to hear budget proposals from the Governor's May revision.

## **2. CALFED Contracting**

The Program has been experiencing some difficulties in obtaining Architecture and Engineering services contracts for consulting work. These consultants are an important element in the Program as they have the expertise to produce the many technical analyses and reports required for the Program to move on to the implementation stage. The delays have been

significant in some cases, however, after numerous meetings and the application of various administrative solutions, it appears the contracts are again moving through the system. Related agency heads have been very helpful and supportive and have assisted the Program in developing strategies for avoiding this kind of problem in the future. Their efforts are much appreciated.

### **Recent Program Activities**

#### **1. South Delta Bundle**

**South Delta Facilities** – The South Delta Improvements Team (SDIT), consisting of representatives from various agencies, is continuing its efforts to develop technical analyses for evaluation of the various barrier alternatives (single and multiple barrier configurations) for consideration in a project-specific Environmental Impact Report (EIR). It is planned that the modeling of the various barrier configurations will be conducted over summer 2000.

**Interim Dredging Project** – DWR has released a proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study for the Dredging of Selected Areas of the South Delta and an associated Biological Inventory/Biological Assessment. The proposed dredging will be conducted near Tracy Oasis Marina, Del's Boat Harbor, Livermore and Mendota Yacht Clubs, Middleton, Hammer, and Little Hawaii islands, and selected agricultural diversions on Grant Line and Fabian-Bell canals. This project has two objectives: 1) contribute to restoring safe and hazard-free boating and navigation in south Delta channels, and 2) mitigate for low water levels downstream of the temporary barriers without affecting State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project (CVP) operations. The SDIT is continuing its efforts to finalize necessary mitigation efforts and secure regulatory approval. Dredging is expected to begin in August 2000, during the dredging window.

**Recirculation** – DWR hosted a stakeholder work group on April 25, 2000, to discuss the scope of the proposed recirculation Feasibility Study. The stakeholder input is important to assist CALFED/DWR/U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) in the formulation and study of recirculation of water pumped from the Delta by the SWP and CVP to help meet San Joaquin River flow and water quality objectives. Based upon stakeholder input, one of the key concepts in the study will be the underlying assumption that any recirculation efforts will result in "no net loss" to exports.

Tracy Fish Test Facility – The Tracy Fish Facilities Improvement Program, which includes physical improvements, monitoring, and basic research on best improvement actions for fish screening, is in the process of developing a test facility to evaluate screen options. The test facility will be designed to evaluate the various challenges to developing an effective fish screen facility. Those challenges include debris management; tidal influences; varying and complex fish resource requirements; predator management; and requirements for collecting, holding, and sorting fish. A draft Environment Assessment (EA) is expected to be released to the public in the May 2000 timeframe. The proposed facility will be designed for 500 cubic feet per second (cfs), and will include: headworks and trash rack; test channel and screen/louver combinations; two bypasses; active driven lifts and gravity flow bypass; up to two fish separators/holding facilities; testing and evaluation facilities; and truck transfer facilities. Construction of the test facility is anticipated to begin in March 2001 and will be operated and evaluated for 3 to 5 years.

## **2. CALFED Governance**

CALFED staff is continuing to refine the Governance Plan for inclusion in the final Programmatic EIS/EIR. Recently, staff has focused on clarifying and refining the functions and structure for the CALFED Science Program (formerly CMARP). Attached is the most current Science Governance draft. This topic is being discussed in various public forums including the Interim Science Board meeting on May 5, 2000. For information regarding the status of AB 1839 please see the Legislative Update in this report.

## **3. Ecosystem Restoration Program**

ERP Focus Group - The ERP Focus Group is a diverse group of stakeholders, agency biologists, and planners who have been meeting since November 1999. BDAC member Byron Buck is a participant in the Focus Group. Their objective has been to develop a set of consensus policy recommendations regarding long-term implementation and priority-setting for the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program. Some of these recommendations will be included in the ERP Strategic Plan and incorporated into the final EIS/R.

To date, the Focus Group has developed a consensus policy statement on establishing a single blueprint for ecosystem restoration that has been forwarded to the CALFED Policy Group for their consideration and approval. In addition, the Focus Group members have been collaborating on a series of policy memoranda that will be ready for CALFED Policy Group review at their May 24, 2000 meeting. These memoranda include:

Revisions to the Goals and Objectives in the ERP Strategic Plan  
Establishing a Single Blueprint for Ecosystem Restoration  
Priority-Setting and Adaptive Management

The Focus Group will hold its final meeting on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

Environmental Water Quality – The CALFED Salinity and Selenium Work Group (Work Group) held a meeting on April 24, 2000, and agreed to fund two interrelated salt projects. CALFED set aside \$700,000 in grant money to fund salt removal projects in the San Joaquin Valley. A reduction in salinity in agricultural drain water to the San Joaquin River and ultimately the Delta will result in water quality benefits to both drinking water and irrigation water taken from the Delta. An important benefit of salt removal also includes concurrent selenium removal that benefits the environment. The selected projects consist of two phases: 1) salt removal through electrical pretreatment, membrane removal and solidification and, 2) salt recovery, purification and reuse. Although these projects will be funded separately they are integrated in their objectives and will be closely coordinated. These projects were selected by CALFED with the advice of the Work Groups. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) will administer the funding and contract.

### **Water Management Strategy Evaluation Framework**

As described in previous meetings, CALFED is developing an Evaluation Framework as a tool to assist decision-makers in refining CALFED's Water Management Strategy throughout Program implementation. The WMS Evaluation Framework includes defined objectives, performance measures to help gauge progress towards those objectives, and analytical tools that can be used to predict the performance measures under a variety of resource mixes (facilities and operational rules) and operational priorities. These predicted performance measures can be compared to illustrate tradeoffs associated with different approaches to meeting Program objectives.

CALFED has undertaken a comprehensive evaluation of three initial resources mixes, characterized by:

- A. maximum annual Delta exports restricted to 1995 levels with no new surface storage,
- B. surface storage with supply benefits allocated to urban water users, and
- C. surface storage with supply benefits split between urban and agricultural users.

All alternatives include conjunctive use projects north and south of the Delta and full implementation of urban conservation Best Management Practices (BMP) and agricultural water use efficiency practices. The additional conservation component of new local water supply development under each resource mix evaluated is comprised of measures that go beyond BMPs. The key difference is that alternatives B and C include additional surface storage from the enlargement of Shasta Dam (290,000 AF) and construction of Sites Reservoir (2,000,000 AF). Each resource is being evaluated under different operational priorities including water supply reliability, water quality improvement, and operational flexibility for Delta fishery enhancement.

Hydrologic modeling, Delta simulation modeling, urban economic modeling, and estimates of regional transfers have been completed for this initial evaluation. Agricultural economic and crop production modeling are underway, to be followed by an analysis of third-party economic and employment effects. This information is expected to be available over the next several weeks. Once all analytical information is available, CALFED will complete the "scorecard" of performance measure predictions and illustrate significant tradeoff information in a progress report.

### **CALFED Conjunctive Use Grant Program**

CALFED has initiated a Conjunctive Use Grant Program to provide support to locally sponsored conjunctive use projects that could help meet the CALFED objectives of increasing water supply reliability and restoring ecosystem health to the Bay-Delta system.

A request for proposals was released in January 2000, and notice of that release was included in the February 17, 2000 BDAC packet. CALFED recognizes that many stakeholders have legitimate concerns about potential negative consequences of proposed conjunctive use

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operations, including groundwater depletion, third-party impacts and water rights issues. In response to these concerns, CALFED has developed criteria that must be satisfied in order to be eligible for a CALFED grant. Each eligible conjunctive use proposal must:

1. be consistent with CALFED objectives,
2. provide local benefits,
3. contain a plan for education and outreach,
4. comply with local regulations,
5. comply with General Plans,
6. continue a plan to effectively monitor, manage, and protect the project area so that there are no unmitigated impacts,
7. identify a source of recharge water,
8. be technically feasible, and
9. provide for local funding to continue the project.

A total of 26 applications were received by the due date of March 24, 2000. Requests for grant funds total about \$11 million. Applications were received with good geographic diversity throughout the state, ranging from Shasta County to San Diego County. A selection panel made up of CALFED agency staff with technical expertise in conjunctive use management is currently reviewing the applications and preparing recommendations for funding. The selection panel expects these recommendations to be available to BDAC and the Policy Group within the next several weeks.