

CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY: ASSURANCES

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program (Program) is a joint state-federal effort seeking to develop a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system. Once a solution has been identified, the CALFED agencies need to assure that the solution will be implemented and operated as agreed. Because a long-term solution is likely to be made up of numerous individual actions implemented over a number of years, the Program will identify a package of assurances comprised of a number of differing tools to assure implementation of the solution and govern its operation.

Through assurances, the Program is not attempting to craft the ultimate solution or to guarantee the outcome of a solution. Each participant in the CALFED Bay-Delta Program will need to reach its own conclusions about whether the solution meets its needs and, if implemented, whether it presents a high likelihood of success. Assurances, like financing, are part of an implementation strategy.

In addition to developing a package of assurances, the Program will also develop a process to address circumstances that may prevent a key component of the solution from being implemented or operated as agreed. A process is proposed because the Program cannot foresee every eventuality and plan for them. Therefore, a clearly defined process to deal with such unforeseen circumstances is a practical approach to help provide confidence that a long-term solution has the ability to adjust to changing circumstances and will be durable.

Process for Developing Assurances

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program together with the Bay-Delta Advisory Council (BDAC), a federally-chartered citizens advisory committee, has established a working group to formulate, discuss, analyze and recommend appropriate assurance mechanisms. The Assurances Work Group has been meeting since August 1996. Thus far the group has identified the Program elements, stakeholder concerns, a list of assurance tools, a variety of management structures to oversee implementation, and guidelines to help govern the selection of assurances.

In order to focus its discussions, the Work Group also developed a case study or scenario that depicts a mock long-term solution for which assurances are needed. The case study includes some program elements that will be included in any solution, and some that may or may not be part of a solution. It is a difficult task, at times, to try to craft assurances for a solution that has not yet been identified. The case study provides the mechanism for taking discussions from the abstract to the definitive:

The accompanying chart, "Implementation: Assessing Assurances for Case Study," illustrates the Work Group's process. Most of the columns depicted on the chart (Program Elements, Issues/Concerns, Tools, Management Structures, and Guidelines) represent the Work Group's efforts over the last six months. The Work Group is currently using differing management structures and specific tools to craft assurance alternatives for three of the program

elements presented in the case study (Ecosystem Restoration, North of Delta Storage, and Isolated Conveyances).

The Program and Work Group will assess the assurance alternatives for a number of factors including, but not limited to: 1) whether the alternative is consistent with the guidelines; 2) how well the alternative assures implementation of all program elements; 3) whether the assurance adequately addresses the issues and concerns voiced by stakeholders; and 4) the level of confidence the assurance alternative provides for implementing and operating the case study.

Assurance alternatives will be restructured as necessary until they are acceptable. Once CALFED identifies a preferred solution, the assurance alternatives crafted for the case study will be modified to specifically address the elements of the preferred solution. The resulting assurance alternatives will be described in a report on implementation strategies to be released with the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report and Statement (EIR/EIS).

Following release of the Draft Programmatic EIR/EIS the Program and the Work Group will continue to refine the package of assurances. A final package of assurances will be described at the time a Final Programmatic EIR/EIS is released.

Schedule

A workshop is scheduled for late spring/early summer 1997 in order to describe this process to a greater number of stakeholders, and to enlist their help in crafting viable assurance alternatives. A draft report discussing the preliminary package of assurances will be completed in summer 1997, and will be available for review by the CALFED agencies, the Work Group, BDAC, and the public. The revised draft report will accompany the Draft Programmatic EIR/EIS in the fall of 1997 as part of the overall implementation strategy. The final implementation strategy will accompany the Final Programmatic EIR/EIS in the fall of 1998.

Further Information

The Assurances Work Group holds regular meetings approximately every six weeks. In addition, the Program maintains a mailing list to whom relevant information is mailed in advance of the Work Group meetings.

If you have questions, or would like further information, contact the CALFED Bay-Delta Program at (916) 657-2666 or 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155, Sacramento, California 95814.

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