

CR 22 WILL CALFED SOLVE CALIFORNIA'S WATER PROBLEMS?

Many comments expressed the opinion that the CALFED Bay-Delta Program should assure that all future water demands in the State are met. This response addresses these comments and the role CALFED plays in meeting future water needs. CALFED solutions will not solve all of California's water problems or meet all future water demands.

The CALFED mission is "to develop a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system." As part of that mission, one broad objective is to "reduce the mismatch between Bay-Delta water supplies and the current and projected beneficial uses dependent on the Bay-Delta system." CALFED has amplified this objective by developing a three-part strategy to improve water supply reliability. To guide the implementation of this multi-part strategy, CALFED has identified three primary goals:

- Goal A: Increase the utility of available water supplies (making water suitable for more uses and reuses.
- Goal B: Improve access to existing or new water supplies, in an economically efficient manner, for environmental, urban, and agricultural beneficial uses.
- Goal C: Improve flexibility of managing water supply and demand in order to reduce conflicts between beneficial uses, improve access to water supplies, and decrease system vulnerability.

Although the Water Management Strategy will serve as the single integration point for developing these objectives, the tools for meeting these objectives are contained within CALFED's eight program elements.

The water management tools under review to meet CALFED's water supply reliability goals are:

- Program for long-term and short-term water transfers
- Water conservation measures for agriculture, urban areas, and wetlands
- Water recycling
- Storage possibilities related to groundwater and conjunctive use, new surface storage, and hydropower storage facilities reoperation
- Conveyance, including South Delta improvements
- Watershed management activities

- Water quality improvement measures
- Operational strategies, monitoring, and diversion management

A range of water storage options is included in the Preferred Program Alternative. Storage of water in surface reservoirs or groundwater basins can provide opportunities to improve the timing and availability of water for all uses and contribute to the CALFED mission to develop a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system. See Common Response 1 for more information about the CALFED Program.

As part of its ongoing evaluation of the appropriate role of storage alternatives in the CALFED solution, CALFED has initiated the Integrated Storage Investigation. The ISI will coordinate existing storage investigations by individual CALFED agencies, CALFED-initiated storage evaluations and broader water management strategies and analysis to provide a comprehensive assessment of alternative storage options and their utility to overall water management.

Specifically, the ISI will evaluate surface storage, groundwater storage, power facility reoperation and the potential for conjunctive operation of these different types of storage. These investigations, as part of the Water Management Strategy, will contribute to compliance with the Clean Water Act Section 404 Guidelines requirement to select the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative to constructing new storage facilities. The ISI will provide the analyses necessary for CALFED's determination of the proper rule of groundwater and surface storage facilities, and CALFED's Water Management Strategy will rely heavily on these analyses as it identifies an appropriate combination of water management tools for attaining CALFED's water supply reliability goals and objectives.

Decisions to construct groundwater and/or surface water storage will be predicated upon complying with all program linkages, including:

- An assessment of groundwater storage, surface storage, re-operation of power facilities and a fish barrier assessment as part of the Integrated Storage Investigation.
- Demonstrated progress in meeting the Program's water use efficiency, water reclamation and water transfer program targets under the Water Management Strategy.
- Implementation of groundwater monitoring and modeling programs.
- Compliance with all environmental review and permitting requirements.

Subject to the above conditions, new groundwater and/or surface water storage will be developed and constructed, together with aggressive implementation of water conservation, recycling and an improved water transfer market, as appropriate to meet CALFED Program

Draft Common Response 22, November 1999 Page 2

goals. After completion of the Final PEIS/EIR, the first period of implementation will begin as Stage 1 of the implementation phase. During Stage 1, through the Water Management Strategy (including the Integrated Storage Investigation) CALFED will evaluate and determine the appropriate rule of new surface water and groundwater storage, identify acceptable projects and initiate permitting and construction if program linkages and conditions are satisfied. Please see CR 4 for more information about the role of storage in the CALFED Program.

The Program is striving to balance multiple objectives in the Bay-Delta system to accomplish the CALFED mission. CALFED's Water Management Strategy will improve the availability of Bay-Delta water supplies through conveyance and storage actions and ecosystem restoration activities that will improve the resiliency of the Bay-Delta ecosystem, reduce demand by encouraging implementation of water use efficiency and recycling measures, and improve the transfer of water supplies to more effectively move water between users on a voluntary and compensated basis. However, these actions alone will not meet all of California's future water needs. Future demands for water in severe dry conditions will likely result in the need for some rationing of water supplies and some degree of economic hardship. Program studies indicate that given the current knowledge of the Bay-Delta system, it is not possible to safely develop enough additional supply from the Bay-Delta system -- while meeting all program objectives -- to eliminate all future shortfalls. While California water managers must continue to consider and compare the economic, environmental and social consequences of developing alternative supplies in other water management planning forums, a likely conclusion will be that some level of shortage must be accepted in some years.

Please refer to Chapter 1 of the PEIS/EIR, Project Description for an overview of the purpose and need of the Program. Please refer to Chapter 2 of that same document for an overview of the Storage element of the Preferred Program Alternative. For more information, refer to Section 3.6 of the Revised Phase II Report appendix to the PEIS/EIR.

Revised 11/22/99