



## CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM

*The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is an unprecedented cooperative effort among state and federal agencies and the public to ensure a healthy ecosystem, reliable water supplies, good water quality, and stable levees in California's Bay-Delta.*

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# Water Quality Common Program

## Considerations

Through public meetings and comment letters, Californians have told the CALFED Bay-Delta Program that...

- Water users prefer access to high quality source water, rather than reliance on treatment.
- Dilution of pollutants as the dominant strategy will not satisfy the public. Instead, the Program should focus on reducing pollution at the source.
- The alternatives should reduce salt and chemical recirculation and decrease drainage discharge to the San Joaquin Valley.
- Delta water quality should not be degraded by any action or alternative.
- Water quality is now degraded as water moves through the Delta, making it harder for urban water agencies to recycle water.

## Introduction

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program alternatives share common programs for water use efficiency measures, ecosystem restoration, water quality protections, and levee improvement. (The alternatives differ according to the conveyance and storage elements.) This fact sheet summarizes the water quality common program.

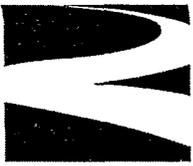
## Importance of Good Water Quality

All Bay-Delta water users depend on high quality water. Fish and wildlife need clean water with adequate nutrients. Agricultural water users require low salinity levels, and urban suppliers need access to good quality source water to maintain reasonable treatment costs. Unfortunately, many land uses do not contribute to good water quality. Also, the ecosystem's water quality needs are not always compatible with those of urban and agricultural users.

## Overview of Water Quality Improvements

The Water Quality Common Program focuses on limiting release of pollutants into the Bay-Delta system and its tributaries, an effort that will benefit all water users. Specifically, the Program will encourage voluntary compliance with Best Management Practices and other measures to manage discharges of salinity, selenium, pesticide residues, and heavy metals from urban stormwater runoff, agricultural drainage, and other sources.

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### Some Possible Concerns

Despite its projected success in reducing pollution, the Water Quality Common Program has some limitations and many issues that require further study. As proposed, the program would not reduce the total mass of salts recycled to the San Joaquin River through the Valley's irrigation system. Moreover, many of the proposed measures might be very costly, including treatment systems for agricultural drainage and management of urban stormwater runoff. Further, significant analysis remains to be done to determine the degree of water quality improvement that can be achieved through watershed management. Also to be studied is the question of whether wetland treatment systems would expose wildlife to toxins.

All of these issues will be addressed during Phase II.

Sources and pollutants of concern will be prioritized and more immediate attention given to those assigned higher priorities.

While the Water Quality Common Program will be essentially the same in every alternative, slight adjustments might be needed to complement an alternative's particular storage and conveyance components and the circumstances of a particular geographic area. For example, an alternative using a dual Delta conveyance system might require a different focus for in-Delta water quality than would an alternative using only through-Delta conveyance.

### Potential Implementation Measures

- Coordinate the enforcement of efficient water quality management practices.
- Improve the management of urban stormwater runoff, in part by shifting the timing of the release of 20 to 30 percent of current runoff volume.
- Clean up and limit runoff from high priority mines like Walker Mine.
- Evaluate the feasibility of allowing urban water purveyors to fund clean-up at high priority mines instead of making costly improvements to wastewater treatment plants.
- Provide incentives for urban water agencies to upgrade their filtration systems. Over time, phase out treatment processes that yield high disinfection byproduct precursors.
- Develop and coordinate programs to manage agricultural drainage by reducing leachate concentrations and volumes, restricting spray programs near waterways, reducing runoff volumes, and limiting pollutant concentrations in runoff. Also shift agricultural discharges from periods of low Delta inflow to periods of higher inflow.
- Institute a Drainage Management Program under which farmers would receive economic incentives to fallow agricultural lands producing harmful runoff.
- Develop watershed protection programs to improve the quality of water flowing from the watershed, and investigate the benefits to the ecosystem and the possibility of increasing water yield.
- Probably as a pilot program, construct wetlands to treat 10,000 to 15,000 acre-feet of upstream wastewater effluent and Delta agricultural drainage.
- The lands that most degrade San Joaquin River water quality could be converted to trusts that focus on drainage management.