



CALFED  
BAY-DELTA  
PROGRAM

*Facts About...*

CALFED Bay-Delta Program

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## *What's Wrong*

California's Delta is a 738,000-acre region where the San Francisco Bay meets the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. It is the heart of California's water management system.

Today the Bay-Delta is in serious trouble. Water quality is a concern. Water supplies are no longer reliable. There has been damage to the ecosystem. Many Delta levees are structurally weak. These problems threaten this tremendous ecological and economic resource.

## *Reasons To Care*

The California Bay-Delta is the largest estuary on the west coasts of North and South America. It is home to plants and animals that are found nowhere else on the planet. Millions of birds migrate through and live in the Bay-Delta, as do more than 53 species of fish, including one of the most productive natural salmon fisheries on the west coast.

The economy of California, the seventh largest in the world, relies heavily upon Bay-Delta water. Key industries from agriculture to hi-tech require a plentiful supply of quality water to prosper. Also, attracting new businesses to the State requires water supply reliability.

The Delta is a key component of the State's \$18 billion agricultural industry, supplying irrigation water to millions of acres of the world's most productive farmland, producing among other crops 45 percent of the country's fruits and vegetables. One in ten California jobs is dependent upon agriculture.

Over 20 million Californians rely on the Bay-Delta for all or some of their drinking water.

There is concern that Delta levees are vulnerable to failure, especially during earthquakes or periods of high runoff. Such a failure could flood farmland and wildlife habitat, and could result in a long interruption of water supply for both urban and agricultural users.

Billions of dollars have been invested in the Bay-Delta system to provide water supply, environmental improvements and economic security over the last century. These investments are at risk.

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## *What's Being Done*

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program was initiated in 1994 to address these and related issues. CALFED is a cooperative effort among state and federal agencies to restore, enhance, and protect California's Bay-Delta system. Working in partnership with urban and agricultural water users, environmental organizations, the business community and others, the CALFED Bay-Delta Program's 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.

## *Progress to Date*

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is being completed in three phases. Phase I began in June 1995 and was completed in August 1996. During this phase, three conceptual alternatives were developed to solve Bay-Delta problems. These conceptual alternatives all include program components to comprehensively address ecosystem restoration, water quality improvements, enhanced Delta levee system integrity, and increased water use efficiency. While these programs are common to the three conceptual alternatives, the key variable distinguishing the alternatives from one another is how each would move and store water within the Bay-Delta system:

- Alternative 1: Water is conveyed through the Delta using the current system of channels;
- Alternative 2: Water conveyance through the Delta is substantially improved by making significant changes to the existing system of channels; and,
- Alternative 3: Water conveyance through the Delta is substantially improved by making significant changes to the existing system of channels and construction of a conveyance facility (of some sort), isolated from the Delta's natural channels, to transport part or all of the water intended for export.

Phase II is currently underway and will be completed in September 1998. It includes a broad-based environmental review and refinement of the three alternative solution options and the selection of a preferred alternative. During Phase III, which will begin in late 1998 or early 1999 and continue perhaps for 20 to 30 years, the preferred alternative will be implemented.

## *Making it Happen*

The people of California are committed to improving the environmental health and water management capability of the Bay-Delta system. This is evidenced by the passage of Proposition 204 in 1996, which provided more than \$450 million dollars for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program's environmental enhancement efforts. Federal authorization for an additional \$430 million over the next three-year period has also been secured. The President's Fiscal Year 1998 Budget included a request for \$143 million to be spent to implement the Program's ecosystem restoration plan. This funding for early implementation of the Program's environmental actions reflects the fundamental need to restore the ecosystem as a necessary first step in the comprehensive solution to Bay-Delta problems.

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While such financial commitments are impressive, they are only part of the solution. Whatever alternative is selected, it must be affordable, equitable, publicly acceptable and legally feasible to implement. It must have political and economic staying power. It must reduce conflict among beneficial uses of water (environmental, agricultural, economic, etc.). And, it must ensure that negative impacts are not simply redirected from one problem area, or region, to another. These principles guide the process.

## *Getting Involved*

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is an historic partnership between the state and federal governments to design and implement the largest environmental restoration effort in United States history. However, government alone cannot solve the problems facing the Bay-Delta. Active participation and understanding of the issues by all the Bay-Delta interests and the public is the key to success.

Already, thousands of Californians have contributed to the Bay-Delta Program. By volunteering time, sharing expertise, expressing an idea and/or casting a vote in support of Prop 204, all have helped shape the solutions being studied today. Each of us has an unprecedented opportunity to get involved in solving the problems of the Bay-Delta and securing California's water future.

## *Want To Know More?*

For further information on how you can participate in restoring the California Bay-Delta, contact CALFED, 1416 Ninth St., Suite 1155, Sacramento, CA, 95814 ph: (916) 657-2666 fax: (916) 654-9780 Website: <http://calfed.ca.gov/>

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