



CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM

Update

December 12, 1997

BDAC Members Provide Feedback on Key Issues

The Bay-Delta Advisory Council, a federally chartered group to the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, today reviewed staff analyses of the three remaining alternatives under consideration for a potential Bay-Delta solution. The draft solution is planned for release in February as part of a draft programmatic Environmental Impact Report/Statement.

“All of the alternatives have strengths and weaknesses,” noted CALFED Executive Director Lester Snow. “A goal of today’s meeting was to receive stakeholder guidance on some of the key trade-offs that are emerging from each alternative in order to assist policymakers in choosing the alternative that is best for all of California’s diverse interests.”

Staff provided the top five strengths and weaknesses for each alternative. Bar graphs for each alternative’s performance on key distinguishing characteristics were also provided for in-delta and export water quality; diversion effects on fisheries; delta flow circulation; water supply and transfer opportunities; operational flexibility; risk to export water supply; total cost; and assurances difficulty.

BDAC members broke out into three groups to discuss tradeoffs for each alternative. Each group reported back on the difficulty of evaluating alternatives, partly due to what one perceives as a strength, another perceives as a weakness, and also due to not enough quantifiable information on the bar charts to allow a comprehensive discussion of relative strengths and weaknesses.

The following key issues emerged across alternatives: the benefits of storage versus its expense; water quality--both in and out of the delta--and the underlying assumptions of the analysis; and tradeoffs between water supply reliability and export quality versus impact on fisheries. These issues will be comprehensively discussed at the January BDAC meeting. BDAC members also requested a listing of all strengths and weaknesses for each alternative, as well as additional data tied to the bar graphs presented at the December meeting.

BDAC input will be addressed by the CALFED Policy Group, policymakers from each of the CALFED lead agencies, on December 18-19. The Policy Group will meet again on January 26-27. At the January meeting, policymakers will make a final decision on the draft preferred alternative.

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