

CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM

Program Overview Spring 1998

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is a cooperative effort among state and federal agencies and California's environmental, urban and agricultural communities. It was initiated in 1995 by Governor Pete Wilson and the Clinton Administration to address environmental and water management problems associated with the Bay-Delta system, an intricate web of waterways created at the junction of the San Francisco Bay and the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and the watershed that feeds them.

The Problem

Today the Bay-Delta system is in serious trouble. Habitats are declining, and some native species are listed as endangered. The system has suffered from impaired water quality. Water supply reliability has declined significantly. Many levees are structurally weak and present a high risk of failure. Ultimately, California's trillion-dollar economy, the seventh largest in the world, is at risk if Bay-Delta system environmental and water management problems are not resolved.

Reasons To Care

- The Bay-Delta is the largest estuary on the west coasts of North and South America, home to plants and animals found nowhere else on the planet.
- More than 22 million Californians rely on the Bay-Delta system 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 contaminate the fresh water supply and result in a long interruption of water deliveries for both urban and agricultural users.
- 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.
- Key California 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 Bay-Delta system is a key component of the State's \$24 billion agricultural industry, supplying irrigation water to millions of acres of the world's most productive farmland.

For more information ■ (916) 657-2666 ■ (916) 654-9780 Fax ■ 1-800-700-5752 Information Line ■ <http://calfed.ca.gov>

Progress to Date

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is divided into three phases.

Phase I -- Completed in September 1996, Phase I concentrated on identifying and defining the problems confronting the Bay-Delta system. Also during Phase I, a mission statement and guiding principles were developed, along with Program objectives and an array of potential actions to meet them.

Phase II -- During Phase II, currently underway, the Program is conducting a comprehensive programmatic environmental review process. Because the CALFED solution area is so large, and because it is approaching its task in an integrated, comprehensive way, environmental review must be conducted on a very broad level.

Phase III -- Site-specific, detailed environmental review will occur during Phase III, prior to the implementation of each proposed action. Implementation of the CALFED Bay-Delta solution is expected to take 25 to 30 years.

Environmental Review

To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (EIS) and the California Environmental Quality Act (EIR), CALFED is preparing a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Programmatic Environmental Impact Report. A 75-day public comment period is being held on the draft March 16 through June 1. The main document and executive summary contain the following information:

- Definition of Program scope.
- Potential impacts of solution alternatives, each containing program elements for ecosystem restoration, water quality, water use efficiency, levee system integrity, watershed management coordination and water transfers, Delta conveyance and a range of storage options.
- Potential impacts of the no-action alternative.
- Steps that have been and will continue to be taken to identify a preferred alternative.
- Current regulatory climate and potential land-use changes.
- Public involvement opportunities.

To find out more about the environmental review process and opportunities for you to comment, including times and locations of public hearings in your area, call 1-800-900-3587.

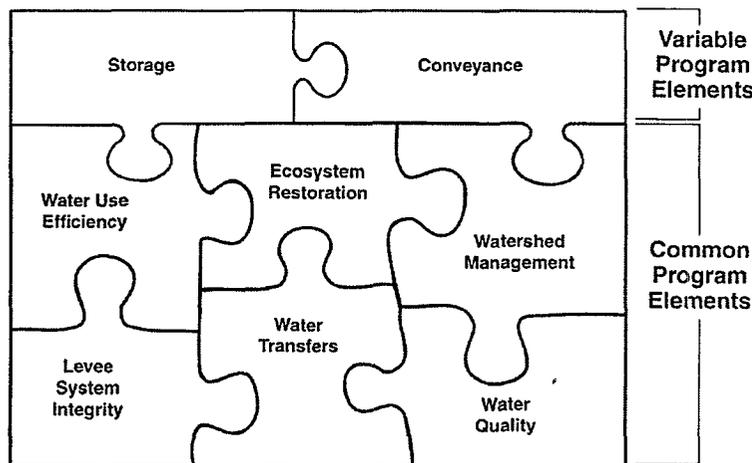
Potential Solutions

Working with the state's urban and agricultural water users, environmental organizations and others, the CALFED Bay-Delta Program has identified three conceptual alternatives to solve Bay-Delta system problems. Each conceptual alternative includes actions to comprehensively address ecosystem restoration, water quality improvements, enhanced Delta levee system integrity, and increased water supply reliability. The three alternatives differ primarily in how each would move and store water within the Bay-Delta system.

Common Programs Form Foundation

During Phase I, it was decided that four Program elements were so fundamental to the system's recovery that they should be included in whichever solution was ultimately chosen. These Common Programs include ecosystem restoration, levee system integrity, water quality and water use efficiency. During Phase II, two additional Common Program elements were added, based on public input and technical analysis. These are watershed management coordination and water transfers. Each alternative, or potential solution, contains the six Common Program elements, each one of which represents a major investment in the system and will significantly reduce resource conflicts.

- **Ecosystem Restoration** – Provides significant improvements in habitat for the environment, restoration of some critical flows and reduced conflict with other Delta system resources.
- **Levee System Integrity** – Provides significant improvements in the reliability of the Delta levees to benefit all users of Delta water and land.
- **Water Quality Program** -- Makes significant reductions in point and non-point source pollution.
- **Watershed Management Coordination** -- Encourages locally led watershed management activities that benefit all Delta system resources.
- **Water Use Efficiency** -- Provides policies for efficient use of water in agricultural and urban settings and environmental purposes, which is essential to using existing and new water supplies wisely.
- **Water Transfers** -- Provides a policy framework for a properly regulated water market to move water between users, including environmental uses, on a voluntary and compensated basis.



Variable Program Elements

In addition to the Common Program elements, some of the alternatives include provisions for new or expanded water storage. Each alternative includes modification of Delta conveyance.

- Alternative 1:** **Existing System Conveyance** The Delta channels would be maintained essentially in their current configuration.
- Alternative 2:** **Modified Through Delta Conveyance.** Significant improvements to northern Delta channels would accompany the southern Delta improvements contemplated under the existing system conveyance alternative.
- Alternative 3:** **Dual Delta Conveyance.** The dual Delta conveyance alternative is formed around a combination of modified Delta channels and a new canal or pipeline connecting the Sacramento River in the northern Delta to the SWP and CVP export facilities in the southern Delta.

Assurances

Assurances will be an important component of any solution developed by the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. Each alternative, a set of actions to address problems facing the Bay-Delta system, developed by CALFED includes a package of assurances. Assurances are policy-level actions and institutional guarantees that each alternative will be implemented tomorrow as designed and agreed to today.

Who Pays?

One of the unique aspects of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program is that a strategy for funding the long-term solution is being developed as an integral part of the overall program. Neither one sector of society nor one revenue source will shoulder complete responsibility for paying to implement the ultimate solution alternative. Rather, the cost will be shared by many entities, possibly including user fees, federal appropriations, private-public partnerships and general obligation bonds.

The people of California are committed to improving the Delta. This is evidenced by the passage of Proposition 204 in 1996, which provided more than \$450 million 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.

Getting to a Solution -- The Phase II Interim Report

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. The Phase II Interim Report is an important disclosure document. It describes the CALFED process, solution alternatives and the fundamental Program concepts, and analyses that have revealed the comparative technical advantages of each alternative. It also describes how the CALFED agencies will use analysis results in a public process to proceed to the selection of a preferred Program alternative by December 1998. *To obtain a copy, call 1-800-900-3587 or visit the CALFED website at <http://calfed.ca.gov>.*

Getting Involved

Government alone cannot solve the problems facing the Bay-Delta system. Active participation and understanding of the issues by all the Bay-Delta system interests and the public is the key to success. Technical working groups, public meetings and workshops, and the federally chartered Bay-Delta Advisory Council all provide opportunities for Californians to participate in the decision-making process. 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. To find out how you can get involved in helping to restore the environment and water management of the Bay-Delta system, call the CALFED public information line at 800-700-5752 or visit its website at <http://calfed.ca.gov>.

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