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Nakanishi, Machado clash over Delta restoration plan

By Craig Cassidy, city editor

Assembly candidate and Lodi City Councilman Alan Nakanishi sideswiped opponent Mike Machado on Friday, claiming that Machado supports a Delta restoration plan that would lead to the destruction of the Woodbridge Dam.

Machado said Nakanishi is flat-out misinformed.

"There is no way the dam would be removed," Machado said. "Mr. Nakanishi is the ophthalmologist. He should have his eyes checked."

A CALFED spokesman said he is not aware of any plans to destroy the dam, a linchpin of the area's farm economy.

"I am not sure where he got his information," Dan McCarroll said.

Nakanishi, a Republican, called on Machado to reverse his support of the state-federal CALFED Delta restoration plan.

For several years, the Woodbridge Irrigation District and CALFED officials have discussed replacing the dam, and have drawn up plans for the new dam. A new dam would enhance the river's fishery and perhaps allow Lodi Lake to be filled year-round for recreational purposes.

Nakinishi cited a report released Friday by Gov. Gray Davis and Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt calling for "the modification or removal" of several dams in Northern California. The list includes the Woodbridge Dam. It does not specify which would receive which treatment.

Nakanishi, though, contended the report means the dam will be permanently torn down.

"If you look at the history of this, it just doesn't look like they want the dam," said Tim Clark, a Nakanishi consultant. "CALFED and federal

programs have always wanted to get rid of that dam. If it walks like a duck, and acts like a duck, it probably is a duck."

A CALFED spokesman said he knew of no such plans.

Nakanishi said Friday he had learned of the supposed plan through sources he would not name.

"My people out there, we have very close sources," he said. "This is the information we have gotten. I have a good team, a very good team."