CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM

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Memorandum

Date: May 20, 1996

To: Interested Parties

From: Lester A. Snow, Executive Director
CALFED Bay-Delta Program

Subject: Developing the CALFED Bay-Delta Program's No-Action Alternative

Attached for your information and comment is a copy of a discussion paper regarding the CALFED Bay-Delta Program's (Program) approach to developing the No-Action Alternative and Cumulative Impact Analysis for the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR). We would appreciate receiving your comments by June 1, 1996. The paper describes the Program's proposed approach to screening programs, projects, policies and institutional actions to determine whether they should be included in the no-action alternative. The Program is proposing to use six criteria to screen candidate actions and policies for inclusion. The paper also describes the Program's approach for developing the cumulative impact analysis and provides additional screening criteria to determine which actions should be considered in that analysis.

The expected result of the rigorous screening process developed for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program EIS/EIR is that relatively few additional programs, projects, policies or institutional actions will be included in the no-action alternative beyond those already in place. Only those actions that have been fully permitted, approved and funded will meet all of the screening criteria for inclusion in the no-action alternative. Therefore, the no-action alternative may not differ greatly from existing programs, projects, policies and institutional actions. Actions that do not meet all of the screening criteria for inclusion in the no-action alternative will be considered for inclusion in the cumulative impact analysis.

Program staff is in the process of identifying which potential actions to screen using the criteria listed in this paper. A draft report will be prepared that will discuss the screening process, actions considered for screening, actions selected for inclusion in the no-action alternative, actions selected for inclusion in the cumulative impact analysis, and actions not included in either the no-action alternative or the cumulative impact analysis because they

did not meet the identified criteria. The report will also provide rationale for all such decisions. A workshop will be held in mid-July to further discuss our findings.

The Program is aware that similar efforts are being undertaken for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Central Valley Project Improvement Act Programmatic EIS and the State Water Resources Control Board's EIR on the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary. The no-action (or no-project) alternative is likely to be different for each of these processes. As we proceed, the Program will make every effort to keep all parties informed of the differences and similarities between these programs.

Attachment