



Reading

CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM

Date: February 13, 1998
To: Water Quality Technical Group
From: Rick Woodard
Subject: Next Meeting and Other Topics

The next meeting of the Water Quality Technical Group will be held from 1:00 p.m until 4:30 p.m. on February 25, 1997 in Hearing Room A of the California Energy Commission Building, located at 1516 9th Street, Sacramento. The meeting agenda is enclosed.

Also enclosed is a copy of the draft Water Quality Program Plan that is an appendix to the Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR scheduled for public distribution in mid-March. In August this year, the Water Quality Technical Group was asked to review a draft of this report, previously titled the Water Quality Component Report. The current version incorporates comments from that review. Subsequent to publication of the August draft a decision was made that the Affected Environment and Impact Assessment portions of the report would be moved into the Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR. Therefore, the Water Quality Program Plan now consists of a description of the Program, water quality actions, and a draft framework for its implementation.

In response to stakeholder recommendations, an independent Science Review Panel was recently organized to evaluate the Ecosystem Restoration component of the CALFED Bay Delta Program. The recommendations that resulted from the effort have been recognized as contributing to the technical validity of that program component. Accordingly, a similar undertaking is being considered for other program components, including Water Quality. We would appreciate your ideas on how best to proceed.

Working groups have been used by the CALFED Bay Delta Program to provide technical input on specific elements in Water Use Efficiency, Levee Stability and the Ecosystem Restoration Programs. It has been suggested by some of the CALFED agencies that a Water Quality Program Working Group be formed whose functions would include helping to develop the Implementation Strategy Framework, refining the Water Quality Program actions, and

CALFED Agencies

California
The Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Water Resources
California Environmental Protection Agency
State Water Resources Control Board

Federal
Environmental Protection Agency
Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service

developing prioritization mechanisms (in terms of solutions to critical problems affecting the Bay-Delta estuary). A working group for the Water Quality Program could, for example, be formed as a sub-group to the WQTG. The Parameter Assessment Team, charged with developing the parameter list and the target levels, is an example of a sub-group from the WQTG. We would also like to hear from you on this concept.

Here are some of the elements we will be discussing at the next WQTG meeting on February 25, 1998:

Science Review Panel

1. Should a Science Panel be formed?
2. How should such a panel be composed? (What expertise and perspectives should be represented?)
3. Should such a function be a one-time review or should it be a continuing feature of the Water Quality Program element?
4. What tasks should the panel be asked to perform?

Working Group

1. Is there a need for a standing working group to address implementation issues related to the Water Quality Program element of the CALFED program?
2. How would such a group be composed? (What relationship would it have to the WQTG? Would such a group be a subcommittee of the WQTG similar to the Parameter Assessment Team?)
3. What would be the tasks of the working group? (Assist in developing the implementation strategy and detailed implementation plan? Assist on an ongoing basis with program implementation?)

We intend to provide opportunity at the meeting for discussion of these matters, but would appreciate your input sooner if possible.

After release of the Programmatic EIS/EIR, and prior to its finalization in October, we intend to move forward on implementation. The planned Implementation Strategy Framework, which will be developed within the next three months, and the draft Implementation Plan, which will be based on the Framework, are viewed as creating the "bridge" between the Programmatic level of detail and ultimate decisions on investments for water quality improvement. The "Strategies for Phased Implementation" section of the Water Quality Program Plan presents concepts that we think are essential to the implementation strategy. The following are the four cornerstones we envision as being critical to the implementation process:

1. Continued stakeholder involvement to ensure that the Program focuses on the highest priority water quality problems and invests appropriately and effectively in implementing solutions while taking stakeholder interests into account.
2. Additional applied research and evaluation of the impacts of parameters of concern on beneficial uses.
3. Further development of strategies, actions, and methods of correcting water quality problems, so that the most economical and effective control strategies can be employed.
4. Monitoring and evaluation of efforts, followed by modification of approaches as necessary to continually optimize the benefits accruing from water quality investments.

We believe your assistance in establishing a sound foundation for the implementation phase of the program is critical. Please provide us with any comments or suggestions. We will be discussing this as an agenda item at the February meeting.

We would appreciate receiving your initial comments on the formation of a Science Review Panel and a Working Group before the February 25, 1998 WQTG meeting.

Any input we receive before the February meeting will be appreciated, but no final decisions on our approach will be made until we have had the opportunity for discussion at the meeting.

The water quality team is looking forward to seeing you on February 25. Please call me at (916) 653-5422 or Judy Heath at (916) 653-2994 if you have any comments or questions.

Enclosure