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# Assembly California Legislature

**PATRICIA C. BATES**  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, SEVENTY-THIRD ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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February 23, 1999

Lester A. Snow  
Executive Director  
CALFED Bay-Delta Program  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Snow:

One of the first things I learned during my initial weeks as an Assemblymember is the importance of water to my District. Urban Southern California relies heavily on imported water from the Colorado River and State Water Project for its economic prosperity and quality of life. Our Colorado River supply is uncertain because of a limited entitlement. The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is working to make our Colorado River supply more dependable. I am heartened to learn that Metropolitan also is working with CALFED to solve longstanding problems in the Bay-Delta that threaten the quantity, quality and reliability of the supplies we receive from the State Water Project.

With this in mind, I appreciate the importance of CALFED's task and plan to follow its efforts with keen interest in the coming years. I appreciate the hard work that your staff, the Governor's office, and the Secretary of the interior have done over the past four years. CALFED has succeeded in bringing all the different stakeholders to the bargaining table and helping them realize that they indeed have common interests. Your chance of achieving ultimate success – a long term, comprehensive solution for the Bay-Delta that has widespread support – depends on maintaining this effort. It is evident that plenty of hard work remains to be done so that, CALFED can fill in the gaps in the draft preferred alternative, especially in the area of water quality.

CALFED's revised PhaseII Report is a significant step toward accomplishing your stated goal of restoring the Bay-Delta as a dependable supply of high-quality water and a healthy ecosystem. I support the balanced, multi-faceted approach taken in the draft preferred alternative which proposes a variety of water management tools including conservation, recycling, transfers, and new underground and surface storage. This is the only way to solve problems that developed over the past 150 years and were caused by a number of factors, not just the water projects.

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My District and the rest of Southern California have several specific needs from CALFED's Bay-Delta solution. Chief among these is improved water quality. We must have a better quality of water to safeguard public health, meet future drinking water standards in a cost-effective manner, and expand water-recycling projects. But improved water quality is not quite so meaningful if the supply is not also reliable. The Bay-Delta supply is not as dependable as it once was; without improved reliability, our water providers cannot plan effectively to fulfill present and future needs. We also need a healthy Bay-Delta ecosystem. There is a definite connection between the health of the ecosystem and the health of our water supply.

CALFED needs to take several steps to achieve these goals. The revised Phase II Report acknowledged urban California's need for improved water quality and set satisfactory long-term goals. But we need benchmarks so we can measure CALFED's progress toward achieving the long-term objectives and know whether further steps – increased storage capacity and a new canal to carry water around the Delta rather than through it – are necessary.

CALFED also must provide regulatory certainty in how the Bay-Delta system is operated. The Bay-Delta solution must protect Southern California from the impact of reductions in our State Water Project deliveries in the future.

In addition, CALFED needs to recognize that while conservation and recycling programs are very important, they do not by themselves improve the quality and reliability of water supplies from the Bay-Delta. Southern Californians already spend millions of dollars to use our water as efficiently as possible. Even so, we need gains in water quality and reliability that can only be realized through construction of new groundwater and surface storage. Expanded storage capacity also is necessary to improve the situation for Bay-Delta fisheries and open the water transfer market.

Perhaps most importantly, CALFED needs to offer assurances to Californians that the Bay-Delta solution will be carried out as planned. In particular, urban California must be assured that the benefits it receives will be comparable to those gained by other areas of the state and that we will not be asked to pay more than our fair share of the solution, commensurate with the benefits we receive.

I appreciate this opportunity to comment on the revised Phase II Report and draft preferred alternative and I look forward to charting CALFED's progress in the future.

Sincerely,



Patricia Bates  
Assemblywoman, 73<sup>rd</sup> District