

Draft of letter in response to letter 99-106

Date

Alex Hildebrand
23443 S. Hays Road
Manteca, CA 95337

Dear Mr. Hildebrand:

This letter responds to your request dated April 11, 1999 for information on the nature of the FY 2000 budget items related to habitat restoration in floodplains and marshes, river channel changes, and improved instream flows and how the proposed actions will be controlled to assure compliance with CALFED principles, including avoidance of redirected impacts. Within this context, you specifically ask about actions proposed for floodplain restoration and the improvement of instream flows in the south Delta and the San Joaquin River.

CALFED is working closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' San Joaquin and Sacramento River Basins Comprehensive Study to identify actions that can reduce flood damage and to generate environmental benefits. San Joaquin River floodplain restoration is a high priority for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. As you mentioned, the Paradise Cut Bypass is being considered. The Chowchilla bypass, as well as other bypasses, will also be evaluated. In keeping with the CALFED goal of restoring or re-creating natural river regimes, the Program is focusing on restoring or re-creating habitat on refuges and privately-managed grasslands and wetlands that can accommodate overflow floodwaters.

CALFED shares your concern that the San Joaquin system water supplies are intensively used in most water years and there are few opportunities to acquire water without corresponding reductions in consumptive uses and other irrecoverable losses. Throughout the Central Valley watershed, CALFED through the Integrated Storage Investigation is evaluating expanding the storage available. If the opportunity arises to obtain Federal water, CALFED will comply with State and Federal law.

CALFED supports the carefully considered implementation of the VAMP as the means to meet spring flow targets in the San Joaquin River system. An integral part of that program is an evaluation of the effectiveness of that program on restoration of endangered and threatened fish, as well as potential impacts on summer flows, water quality, and reservoir carryover storage.

CALFED staff, working closely with participating agencies and stakeholders, is developing a broad, comprehensive review process for all Early Implementation actions to assure compatibility with CALFED Program policy direction, solution principles, scientific, engineering and other technical guidance. This process includes explicit review by the stakeholder community, CALFED staff, the ERP science panel, Ecosystem Roundtable, BDAC, and the CALFED Policy Group. I believe that this process will

assure that specific actions approved through the Early Implementation process will be compatible with regional goals to achieve flood protection and environmental benefits.

Thank you for your continuing interest in CALFED. If you have any further questions, please feel free to call me at (916) 657-2666.

Sincerely,

Lester A. Snow
Executive Director

(note cc's in Alex's letter) Zuckerman, SDWA Board, Machado, and Pombo. Also, Alex asks for distribution to BDAC.