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**CONTRA COSTA
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Walter J. Bishop
General Manager

March 7, 2000

Hon. Michael Machado
Chairman, Assembly Committee on Water, Parks and Wildlife
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Two Critical Changes to be Implemented in the Next 18 Months in the Current CALFED Program

Dear Chairman Machado:

In response to your request during the February 29 Joint Hearing of the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee and Senate Agriculture and Water Committee, here are the two critical changes that, in my view, should be made within CALFED during the next 18 months to make the CALFED Program successful.

First, CALFED must base program development and decision-making functions on a substantial, widely accepted peer-review process. This will provide more balanced decision-making and implementation of projects, while helping to achieve continuous improvement in water quality, water supply, and the ecosystem. The underlying principle associated with these functions is an improved scientific base for CALFED decisions -- regulatory decisions and CALFED actions must stand up to scientific peer review. The establishment of the Aquatic Habitat Institute could be used as a legislative model for the peer review process.

Second, CALFED's responsibility and accountability must increase. To this end CALFED must be given authority to directly contract for work, avoiding the multiple agency approval, funding and administrative processes. CALFED would then be accountable for project completion, project effectiveness and contractor performance. Progress and funding should also be linked to ensure accountability. In addition to having programmatic oversight for monitoring and reporting on accomplishments and facilities, CALFED would award contracts and would have the authority and responsibility to terminate contracts if the contractor fails to perform. Providing a direct funding mechanism to CALFED would also be critical.

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I trust that this is helpful to you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Walter J. Bishop
General Manager

DAB

cc: Jo-Ellen McChesney, Chief Consultant, Committee on Water, Parks and Wildlife
Contra Costa Water District Board of Directors