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April 26, 2000

John V. Silva, Chairman
Board of Supervisors
County of Madera
209 W. Yosemite Avenue
Madera, CA 93637-3534

Dear Mr. Silva:

Thank you for forwarding a copy of your letter of March 22, 2000, to Representative George Radanovich regarding the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.

I would like provide you with some information relevant to the question of continued authorization of expenditures for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program June 1999 draft program plan contained a commitment to develop and construct new water storage facilities. This commitment occurs in several locations, specifically in the *Revised Phase II Report* (page 86), the *Implementation Plan* (page 19), and in the program description in the *Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report* (page 2-14). As with all CALFED commitments, it is qualified. Executive branch departments generally cannot make commitments to construct projects that have not yet been authorized by Congress or the State Legislature. Additionally, the CALFED agencies have attempted to improve all facets of water management in California. Water conservation and water transfers are other important facets of water management.

The CALFED agencies have indeed spent millions of dollars studying and publishing information on water management in California. Much of this information documents the various ways in which additional developed water supplies could be used to improve water quality, water supply reliability, and ecosystem health. Given the controversy surrounding water development in California, this information is important in documenting the value of new water development. Although some in California believe the need for new water development is obvious, this is not a universally-held opinion. We believe the information we have published documents that water development is a worthwhile contribution to our effort to improve resource management in California.

CALFED Agencies

California	The Resources Agency Department of Fish and Game Department of Water Resources California Environmental Protection Agency State Water Resources Control Board Department of Food and Agriculture	Federal	Environmental Protection Agency Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service Bureau of Reclamation U.S. Geological Survey Bureau of Land Management U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service U.S. Forest Service Department of Commerce National Marine Fisheries Service Western Area Power Administration
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The June 1999 draft CALFED Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report includes an Implementation Plan. On pages 19 and 20 of that Implementation Plan, the CALFED agencies propose a groundwater management and conjunctive use program that relies heavily on locally-initiated projects. I would like to quote from the Implementation Plan, with emphasis on the local involvement that CALFED agencies have proposed:

Groundwater Banking and Conjunctive Use - This first stage includes developing **cooperative partnerships with local agencies and landowners** in both the north-of-Delta and south-of-Delta areas, and includes construction of several south-of-Delta projects. Additional south-of-Delta and north-of -Delta projects, if feasible, could be constructed in later stages.

1. Develop and implement a framework for groundwater banking and conjunctive use projects (yr 1).
2. **Include provision to protect overlying and other landowners' water rights (yr 1-7).**
3. **Provide funding assistance to local governments and special districts for groundwater plan development (yr 1-7).**
4. Identify potential projects **and local cooperating entities** and define CALFED role (yr 1-3).
5. Conduct baseline monitoring and modeling (yr 1-7).
6. Initiate field studies (yr 2-7).
7. Project environmental documentation and permitting (yr 1-3).
8. Project design (yr 2-4).
9. **In partnership with local entities**, construct two to three groundwater banking facilities with a total target volume of 500,000 acre-feet (yr 1-7).
10. Study additional project sites (yr 2-7).

You may be aware that Congress has appropriated federal funds for groundwater and surface storage activities that will be consistent with the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. We released a Conjunctive Use Grant Application Package in January 2000 to solicit and help fund conjunctive use projects that help meet CALFED objectives. As stated in the Package, local agencies are eligible for grants. We understand and quite agree that local agencies have a significant role in analyzing and determining if groundwater and conjunctive use projects are technically feasible and appropriate. We are acting on that understanding by soliciting projects from local agencies.

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I hope this information is helpful. Please call me at (916) 657-2666 if you have further questions on this matter.

Sincerely,



Steven R. Ritchie
Acting Executive Director

cc: The Honorable George Radanovich
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