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CALFED Bay-Delta Program

May 17, 2000

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The Honorable Gray Davis
Governor, State of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Davis:

Representatives of water agencies from San Diego and Orange counties¹ requested I write to express our support for the ongoing state and federal discussions to develop a CALFED Bay-Delta solution. We support your efforts to arrive at a solution that protects California's environment and economy and appreciate the leadership role you have taken in these discussions. Your continued leadership is critical to the development of a solution package that enjoys the support of California's urban water users.

In testimony at numerous public hearings and in written comments on CALFED's draft environmental documents, our agencies have spoken to the need to improve the Bay-Delta as a reliable and affordable source of high quality water. The Bay-Delta system needs certain physical improvements before CALFED can realize its goal of continuously improving the quality and reliability of Bay-Delta water supplies. The package that emerges from the state and federal discussions must include a commitment to make these improvements. Beyond this, however, we believe the solution package must contain three critical elements if it is to be successful.

- First and foremost, the package must provide regulatory certainty. The package must include formal assurances that efforts to restore the Bay-Delta as a healthy ecosystem will not come at the expense of the quality or reliability of urban water supplies. We support the establishment of an appropriately sized environmental water account. We are concerned, however, by a proposal that reportedly would endow the account with as much as 400,000 acre-feet of water, much of it at the outset of the CALFED Program. This proposal, if implemented on top of existing

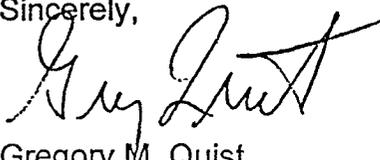
¹ San Diego County Water Authority, Helix Irrigation District, Municipal Water District of Orange County, Sweetwater Authority, Vista ID, Riverview WD, Yorba Linda WD, Vallecitos WD, Irvine Ranch WD, Yuima MWD, Olivenhain MWD, Moulton Niguel WD, Padre Dam MWD, Otay WD, South Coast WD, Coastal MWD, Santa Fe ID, Valley Center MWD, Fallbrook PUD, Carlsbad MWD, El Toro WD, Mesa Consolidated WD, Trabuco Canyon WD, Berrenda Mesa WD, Orange County WD

regulatory actions, could remove what little flexibility remains in the system and further strain the reliability and quality of Delta water supplies. The CALFED solution package must be balanced to provide water quality and supply reliability improvements along with improvements for the environment.

- Second, Delta operational decisions need to be based on better science. Delta fisheries are affected by many factors, all of which must be addressed by CALFED's ecosystem restoration strategy. However, federal regulatory agencies appear to focus almost exclusively on restricting export project operations, even when scientific evidence suggests the environmental benefit of additional pumping restrictions may be relatively small. By focusing almost exclusively on pumping restrictions, these agencies risk unnecessarily injuring the state's economy while overlooking actions that could help to restore the ecosystem. Science shows that a broader effort that includes innovative habitat restoration projects is needed.
- Third, we believe water quality and supply reliability projects must be funded on par with ecosystem restoration projects. To date, the federal government has appropriated \$220 million for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. Of those funds appropriated, \$190 million has gone toward environmental restoration activities. We supported the past funding allocations in recognition of the importance of ecosystem restoration in the Bay-Delta. But we seek a more equitable division of future funds so that significant water quality and supply reliability improvements can be made.

The footnoted agencies, as well as others, will be writing directly to express concerns similar to those outlined above. We encourage you to direct the state representatives to the CALFED discussions to include the three elements outlined above in any package brought forward as a CALFED solution.

Sincerely,



Gregory M. Quist,
Vice-President,
Rincon Del Diablo Municipal Water District

cc: Mr. James H. Blake, ACWA President
Mr. Steve Hall, ACWA Executive Director
Ms. Nancy Egger, Region 10
Mr. Steve Ritchie, CALFED ✓
Agency Representatives