



**CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM**

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May 24, 2000

Mr. Don Kraft
512 South Hutchins Street
Lodi, CA 95240

Dear Mr. Kraft:

This is in response to your letter of April 10, 2000 to Steve Ritchie, Acting Executive Director of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. When your letter arrived, I asked Mr. Ritchie if I could respond to it personally since you and I have met and had an opportunity to tour parts of the Delta together.

CALFED has been working since 1995 to analyze literally hundreds of ideas to "fix the Delta" and many elements of your proposal are similar to ideas that we have considered and either incorporated into our draft preferred alternative, or rejected for various reasons. I would like to respond specifically to several points in your letter.

First, CALFED is not proposing construction of Auburn Dam. We have stated that we will focus on off-stream reservoir sites for any new surface storage, and will consider expansion of existing on-stream storage. We considered 52 potential reservoir projects. In June 1999, we screened those down to 12 sites retained for additional consideration. Auburn is not on that list.

Your concern about water quality is shared by experts who have studied the problems of the Bay-Delta system. Water quality is a concern for urban drinking water, a concern for the environment, and -- to a lesser extent -- a concern for agriculture. Many of our CALFED actions are intended to provide better water quality, either through source reduction or treatment.

Your proposal for foothill canals between river systems is similar to some ideas considered by CALFED early in our process, although the purposes of the canals is different. We concluded that such canals would be extremely expensive to build, and would have very serious impacts to the environment of the foothills. The purpose of the canals you propose is groundwater recharge, and CALFED recognizes the importance of groundwater recharge and conjunctive use with surface supplies. We are studying the potential storage of

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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an additional 750,000 acre feet in aquifers of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys, and have already solicited expressions of interest from agencies that are interested in working with CALFED on long term projects. In the short term, CALFED has initiated a conjunctive use grant program this year that will provide \$2,150,000 to spur implementation of worthwhile projects. In addition, there are other CALFED actions that will help achieve the same purpose as the canal and recharge pond idea you have proposed. CALFED proposes to expand floodplain areas where feasible. This will recharge groundwater, improve flood management, provide valuable habitat, and help preserve agriculture.

Regarding the methods to achieve better water quality, you place great faith in tule marsh and microbes. Certainly both have their place in the effort to improve water quality. They have their limits as well. For example, tule marshes used in polishing water from treatment plants take a significant amount of space, even for relatively small-volume treatment plants. For very large treatment plants, treatment marshes are sometimes not feasible. In addition, marshes may concentrate substance of concern and attract wildlife to areas of high concentration. Your letter mentioned the Kesterson Wildlife Refuge, and that is a good example. Marshes may also make some substances more dangerous. For example, mercury may take on a more dangerous form in marshes, namely methylated mercury. CALFED is considering many ways to improve water quality. Some of these include source reduction, switching to alternative water sources, treatment, water conservation that reduces discharge of substances, implementation of Best Management Practices for urban and agricultural pesticide use. You correctly point out that our water quality problems and constituents of concern are quite diverse, and the solutions to these problems will need to be diverse as well.

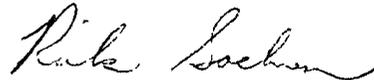
Finally, you propose a pipeline to carry wastewater from the Santa Clara Valley to the Delta at Tracy for export to the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California. Agencies responsible for water supply and water recycling throughout the Bay Area have been working for years to develop the best plan for managing water in the area. At this point, the ideas that hold the most promise involve sharing supplies of fresh water and recycled water among the Bay Area communities themselves, rather than asking others to use Bay Area recycled water. CALFED supports this approach.

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I know that you have some of CALFED's publications. If you do not have our draft Water Quality Program Plan, Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan, and Phase II Report, you may want to contact our office to get copies. (But please keep in mind that the documents are lengthy; these volumes together comprise about 1,000 pages.)

Thank you for your continuing interest in solving Bay-Delta problems. Believe me, it is very refreshing when private citizens such as you are willing to spend time and think creatively about natural resource management. At this stage, CALFED is still working on programmatic, or very general, planning. Your continued input will be especially important as we work on the details of implementation in the months and years to come.

Sincerely,



Rick Soehren
Environmental Resources Specialist