Exec Summary Only

Summary Analysis

California's Water Future:

Framework for Action

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June 18, 2000

This analysis is prepared as an overview of the above referenced document and is intended to provide the Regional Council of Rural Counties with information and recommendations which may be helpful in developing policy positions. The analysis closely follows the outline of the original document so as to allow the reader to reference back and forth. Following each sections analysis a recommendation is offered. An Executive Summary precedes the analysis.

Executive Summary of the Analysis

It was not possible to find significant portions of this Framework which were remotely consistent with the stated objectives of the Regional Council of Rural Counties. Even by applying a liberal interpretation of the RCRC Solution Principles as developed in the North South Process, there were no instances in which RCRC's main objectives would be achieve through implementation of this Program. Furthermore, the Framework, if funded and carried out as presently written, would be significantly harmful to rural, northern California's people, their environment and their independence for local decision making.

Unless significantly changed prior to the Record of Decision, the Framework should be opposed at all levels, with all available resources. The immediate should be to achieve changes in the document. Fail that, the objective should be one of halting its implementation and if possible reversing the Frameworks policy direction. These efforts should be concentrated initially at the federal congressional level and then broadened to include state efforts. An ongoing, proactive information campaign by RCRC will be critical to this effort.

Areas of specific concern include:

1. The Framework divides the State into two distinct priority areas. This is what I have previously referred to as the bifurcation of the state into an environmental and economic "caste" system. The Delta Estuary/Ecosystem (implicit in this is those who need it for export water or Bay area supplies) and everyone else. The latter will, through the implementation of this proposal, be adversely affected for decades, economically and environmental disadvantaged, and ultimately become a backwater of any future development within this State.

2. The Framework removes local control of groundwater resources and vests them with the State of California. Furthermore, local water district ground water planning is given priority over local County General Plan authority. The proposal establishes a regional scheme which will ultimately, in my opinion, erode local land use authority as well. Counties will eventually become simply local service providers of state and federal mandated programs. Local development will follow the pipeline planning done by the water districts and land use plans would be come reactionary to water planning - not directing such planning.

3. The Framework will lead to a state regionalism combined with a federalization of rural northern California to the disadvantage of local governmental authority. The Framework would place a governance structure in place which would eliminate local elected officials from serving any meaningful role in the CALFED Program. The implications of this, when combined with so far uncounted billions in spending programs, would place local government in a subservient role to CALFED. It would place state and federal agency personnel over local elected officials in a new political hierarchy for the State. This will increase the rate of federalization of rural California and over the long-term implementation of CALFED assure its success.

4. The Framework will create Endangered Species Act regulatory assurances for Delta water exporters at the expense of Delta Tributary areas. This would result in a reversal of California's water rights priority system which would be very harmful to source areas. In addition, it would place regulatory burdens (under ESA) on the parties who are not responsible for the environmental problems of the Delta.

5. The Framework proposal will not increase water supplies or reliability through its implementation - except for water exporters. This will be achieved through predatory water acquisitions in source areas. These acquisitions will likely be carried out through thinly veiled regulatory threats from the CALFED agencies (who also serve as two-thirds of its governing board) in combination with revised water transfer rules favoring private/export interests. When combined