

**Friends of the River
League of Women Voters of California
Mono Lake Committee**

August 2, 2000

Honorable Mary Nichols, Secretary
Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable David Hayes, Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 "C" Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Nichols and Deputy Secretary Hayes:

As members of the interested public and participants in the CALFED process, we wish to commend you on the aggressive Water Use Efficiency (WUE) program included in the June "Framework." Because we support the strongest possible WUE program, we believe several items need to be clarified and/or refined in the Record of Decision (ROD) in order to ensure the most effective WUE program over the long term.

Our specific recommendations are intended to support the three elements of the WUE program included in the Framework: agricultural water conservation, urban water conservation, and water recycling. We believe each of these program elements has its own integrity and should be assured adequate funding to meet program goals. We also wish to preserve and build upon the accomplishments of the two successful stakeholder processes that CALFED has sponsored for the water conservation elements. These processes are: (1) Urban Water Conservation Certification Framework; and (2) Agricultural WUE process which is incentive based and uses a targeted benefits/quantifiable objectives approach.

Specific Recommendations:

- (1) Include in the ROD the targeted benefits/quantifiable objectives approach for the Agricultural WUE program that is being developed by the Agricultural WUE Steering Committee.
- (2) Include in the ROD a commitment for CALFED to develop, adopt, and implement an Urban Water Conservation Certification Process by the end of 2002. CALFED should continue to work with the California Urban Water Conservation Council and the Urban Certification Work Group in order to complete this process.

- (3) Clarify in the ROD that all WUE programs should link access to benefits of CALFED to an agreed upon level of efficiency and include these assurances in the ROD. Eliminate the word "voluntary" in description of the program.

The intent is to preserve the work in progress of the Agricultural WUE Steering Committee and the Urban Certification Work Group, which have under discussion incentives/disincentives in their respective frameworks. For example, in order to have access to the drought water bank and/or to receive benefits from new infrastructure and other improvements, water agencies would have to achieve an agreed upon level of efficiency.

- (4) Include in the ROD the full range of savings for both the Agricultural and Urban WUE program. In addition, state that the water savings estimates from the WUE programs go beyond water supply reliability and include savings from improved water quality, ecosystem restoration, and other benefits. The estimates should include rerouted flows in the potential estimates for water savings for both agricultural and urban sectors, since rerouted flows have the potential for realizing benefits in water quality, ecosystem restoration, etc.

The ROD should either give a full range of numbers on water savings or make it explicit that these numbers are over and above the expected savings from full implementation of the Urban Best Management Practices or the Agricultural Efficient Water Management Practices.

The intent of this clarification is to ensure that rerouted flows are eligible for funding in both programs and are acknowledged for their value in achieving multiple benefits for the CALFED program objectives. The clarification also can indicate the full potential for WUE program to meet CALFED goals.

- (5) Water measurement is a critical part of the WUE and the timeline in the ROD should be tightened to enact legislation in 2002.
- (6) The ROD should allocate funding among the agricultural conservation, urban conservation, and recycling elements of the WUE program sufficient to achieve WUE objectives. WUE funding should not be re-allocated for non-Water Use Efficiency activities. The Framework calls for evaluation of the WUE program after 4 years. This provision places the WUE program under unusual scrutiny. Any redirected investments to achieve the most effective water use efficiency results, and/or introduce new programs as necessary and appropriate should be restricted to WUE activities within the three The ROD should allocate funding among the agricultural conservation, urban conservation, and recycling elements of the WUE program sufficient to achieve WUE objectives. WUE funding should not be re-allocated for non-Water Use Efficiency activities. The Framework calls for evaluation of the WUE program after 4 years. This provision places the WUE program under unusual scrutiny. Any redirected investments to achieve the most effective water use efficiency results, and/or introduce new programs as necessary and appropriate should be restricted to WUE activities within the three

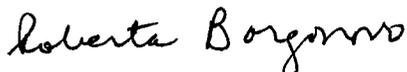
elements of the WUE program. In addition, any competitive grant/loan program should not consider cost alone. Other factors also should be weighed, such as most water saved and/or most beneficial measures for the environment, water quality, etc.

The intent is to ensure a funding package that does not pit conservation against recycling but instead makes WUE competitive with structural options for water supply reliability, such as surface storage options.

- (7) The federal/state cost-sharing arrangement for the WUE program should be included in the ROD and any reauthorization package that is passed by Congress.
- (8) The ROD should clarify the intent of creating a public advisory committee (PAC) for the WUE program. Ideally, the PAC should create a forum for CALFED to work with the California Urban Water Conservation Council (CUWCC), Agricultural Water Management Council, and representatives from community-based organizations concerned with environmental justice issues. The ROD also should clarify the relationship between the PAC and the recommendations emanating from the CUWCC Certification process and from the Agricultural WUE Steering Committee. Again, the PAC should create a forum for incorporating these recommendations into its work.
- (9) For the water reclamation/recycling projects, the ROD should support efforts of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to establish guidelines, not regulations. The guidelines should allow competition among water agencies in order to get the best projects and at the same time, encourage reclamation statewide.

Thank you for considering these comments. We remain committed to working with CALFED to insure the success of the Water Use Efficiency Program.

Sincerely,



Roberta Borgonovo
League of Women Voters of California



Betsy Reifsnider
Friends of the River



Frances Spivy-Weber
Mono Lake Committee