

# BUTTE BASIN WATER USERS ASSOCIATION

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August 11, 2000

Steve Ritchie, Executive Director  
CALFED Bay-Delta Program  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Ritchie:

We are concerned about the June 9, 2000 document entitled California's Water Future: A Framework for Action developed by Governor Davis and Secretary of Interior Babbitt. This plan outlines the implementation of the CALFED program, which addresses the problems of water quality and conveyance through the Bay-Delta.

We would like to address the discussion on management of groundwater in Appendix H. We received a copy of the letter from you to the Northern California Water Association (NCWA) dated July 10, 2000, which tries to clarify Appendix H. We want to go on record as opposing all attempts to circumvent the power of local government with regard to the regulation of groundwater. Therefore, we ask that you incorporate the clarifying language from your letter to NCWA into the Federal Record of Decision.

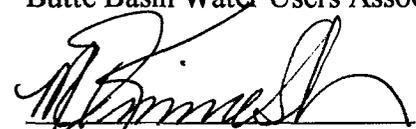
Groundwater management within Butte County is unique. Like other counties within the state, Butte County has a groundwater protection ordinance. This ordinance requires a permit for the transfer of surface water outside of the county if the surface water is replaced by groundwater. Unlike other counties, Butte County's ordinance evolved through the initiative process and was passed by the electorate in November 1996. For this reason, the ordinance is different from groundwater protection ordinances in other counties.

The groundwater ordinance is a request by the citizens to protect groundwater in a fixed manner. Innumerable hours and staff resources have been spent on the implementation of the groundwater protection ordinance in Butte County. Water districts as well as environmental and landowner groups have worked together during this process. We do not agree with an approach to groundwater management that would place AB3030 plans over the statutory authority voted in by the citizens. Also, local water management ordinances should not be regulated by the state.

The CALFED Program has always maintained that it supports local control. Taking the regulatory power over groundwater away from local government is a step in the wrong direction for CALFED. It is a move against their guiding principles. We urge CALFED to change their approach to groundwater management and allow local government to deal directly with the citizens on this issue. We anticipate the upcoming Record of Decision to clarify the confusion in Appendix H and to retain the concept of local control over groundwater.

Sincerely,

Butte Basin Water Users Association



Mark Kimmelshue  
Working Committee Chairman