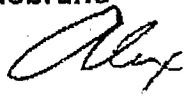


February 11, 1996

To: Lester Snow Fax (916) 654-9780
 From: Alex Hildebrand Fax (209) 825-6180
 Phone (209) 823-4166



Dear Lester:

I have just reviewed the Meeting Package for the February 15 meeting. I have several questions and comments. It may save time in the meeting if they can be addressed in staff comments rather than in response to questions from me and perhaps others with similar concerns.

- 1) Two or more of the examples propose that 100,000 af of water be purchased in the San Joaquin watershed. Purchases of agricultural water in tributary basins for conversion to spring fish flow would substantially reduce the summer return flows needed by downstream riparians and for public trust needs in the main stem of the river unless the summer flows were maintained by other means. Purchases from export water users would not have this problem.
- 2) Raising Friant Dam (per USBR reconnaissance study) would be a better way to acquire 150,000 to 180,000 af of river flow.
- 3) What is meant by a San Joaquin River bypass at the head of Old River? How would this alter the flow split at Old River, and why is it better than an operable Old River barrier?
- 4) How can water pricing to "encourage efficient water use" (i.e., less leach water) avoid exacerbating the problem of high salinity drainage, particularly where that drainage goes into the river via Salt and Mud Sloughs?
- 5) The salinity problem can be reduced by installing the proposed South Delta tidal barriers which would lower the salinity in the DMC by greatly reducing the recapture and reexport of the salt load which comes down the river from Salt and Mud Sloughs. (Refer to SDWA modeling analyses). There must also be a Valley drain.
- 6) How will the San Joaquin River be altered to avoid wide shallow channels? The problem has resulted from aggradation of the old channel and consequent flattening of the floodway due to low flow, upstream erosion, and lack of maintenance. I don't see how this can be corrected by "confining" the floodway. The aggraded material must be removed to restore a narrow low flow channel.

7) Vernalis flow can be restored by circulating water from the DMC to the river and thence back to the export pumps with SWP wheeling of the extra water. How this will affect fishery depends on whether the South Delta tidal barriers are in place, and on whether the time of reexport is modified by using San Luis Dam for temporary storage of recycled water.

The discussion of alternatives is a very good start. These comments and questions are intended to be constructive, not critical.

Sincerely,



Alex Hildebrand