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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

January 15, 1998

Lester Snow
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Lester,

At its December meeting, the CALFED Policy Group made substantial progress in reaching agreement on our approach to a draft Program document. Most important was a general recognition that much work remains on technical analysis, integration of the common and variable components of alternatives, and certain essential elements of a full alternative, such as implementation assurances. Thus, we agreed that rather than select a preferred alternative, we should use the draft document to explain some key findings of the preliminary analysis of alternatives. Further, the draft document must define a process for working with stakeholders over the following months on technical and implementation issues to develop a truly supportable, preferred alternative. Beginning now, and working through the draft public document, this process should be structured to identify and resolve the issues on which the success of the CALFED Program depends.

To help carry this discussion into the next Policy meeting in January, I would like to reiterate and expand upon comments that we made at our December meeting. Generally, we believe that a top priority must be to conduct critical work on the common programs to make them significant, integrated elements of the CALFED Program. The quality of the common programs is crucial both to public support and actual success of the CALFED Program. These programs must not only be technically sound but bold enough to inspire the enthusiastic support of all stakeholders. Several broad concerns were raised about the common programs. First, further definition of the action strategies for the common programs is needed, so that these programs can be incorporated in the implementation planning (i.e., financing and assurances). Second, the analysis of the various alternatives should show specifically how the common programs are expected to contribute to attaining the program's goals. Finally, all of the common programs would benefit from the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan (ERPP) strategy of using

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independent technical review and stakeholder involvement in implementation planning. A plan for addressing these issues for each of the common programs should be developed over the next month.

The attachment accompanying this letter provides more detail on agreements and suggestions regarding the draft document, common programs, Delta conveyance, storage, and supporting implementation documents. We have tried to distinguish between information to be included in the draft and material to be developed for the final document. However, this merits more discussion, especially in light of our intent to structure further work around critical issues. We completely agree that this effort must embrace the issues which stakeholders consider central to their continued participation in and support of the CALFED Program.

I hope that our comments will be helpful to you. Please feel free to call me (415-744-1001) regarding any of these ideas. As always, you or your staff can call on Karen Schwinn (415-744-1861) and the rest of EPA's Bay-Delta Team for assistance as we proceed.

Yours,

Felicia

Felicia Marcus
Regional Administrator

attachment: 5 pp

cc: CALFED Management Team and Policy Group