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Manteca, CA 95337
September 9, 1998

Lester Snow, Executive Director
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 9th Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Lester:

Mary Selkirk solicited suggestions on how to structure the Thursday evening meeting to encourage constructive dialogue on subjects of particular concern to parties in the Delta and elsewhere in San Joaquin County. I believe it would be desirable to have an agenda and opening presentations on the topics listed below.

1) CALFED asserts that its program will provide "improvement for all resource areas". The agricultural community in general and Delta agriculture in particular does not believe that the plan lives up to that commitment and believes that it in fact adversely impacts agriculture. This general concern can be addressed more specifically in relation to broad components of the plan. The concern must be addressed in specific terms and not in platitudes.

2) Although the canal is now only a contingent plan, it is still an option to be built if certain ill-defined "triggers" occur.

a) How can the canal be prejudged to be the best way to correct whatever fish and urban water quality deficiencies remain after implementation of an improved through Delta conveyance?

b) Who will decide whether the deficiencies are such that a canal should be built?

c) How can CALFED conscientiously claim that it will retain "common pool" protection of the Delta, if it contemplates a canal which could carry the entire export water supply in dry years and portions of other years?

d) How can we expect that the through Delta design will be optimized by Agencies that want the canal?

e) What is CALFED's plan for a legal and enforceable guarantee that the canal would be designed, sized, and operated to protect the Delta?

3) If agricultural land and water is reallocated to non-ag use by purchase from willing sellers as CALFED proposes, there will be a substantial cumulative effect on the remainder of agriculture: loss of adequate business to maintain food processing, equipment, and other service industries; loss of tax base for levee maintenance and other local expenses; etc. Additionally, fallowed land is a problem when it becomes incompatible with the adjacent land remaining in agriculture (weed and pest growth or urbanization).

4) Why doesn't CALFED acknowledge that within the lifetime of the plan, if the water supply is not increased, the allocation of water for consumptive use to grow food and fiber will decrease to less than half its present level on a per capita basis?

5) Why doesn't the plan provide for maintenance dredging in San Joaquin River channels and the South Delta?

6) Why does the plan discuss possible new reservoir storage instead of discussing the need for and the provision of a quantified increase in the total available water supply? If the increase in supply does not provide for growing needs and population growth, the plan apparently assumes that urban and environmental needs will be met by transferring water from agriculture for those needs. Transfers are treated as if they were a substitute for new water.

7) If the reservoirs and reservoir operating plans that are proposed are inefficient in capturing flood releases, and if they provide little flood protection, and if they are power consumers instead of power producers, they will probably not get built. Their inclusion in the plan would then be illusory.

If there are convincing answers to these concerns, they should be given. Otherwise the need to address them should be acknowledged. I hope these thoughts will be helpful.

Sincerely,

Alex Hildebrand