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TRINITY COUNTY COPY

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
P.O. Drawer 1613 (530) 623-1217
WEAVERVILLE, CALIFORNIA 96093

Dero B. Forslund, Clerk
Jeannie Nix-Temple, County Administrative Officer

September 15, 1998

K. Maurice Johannessen, Chairman
Senate Select Committee on CALFED
State Capitol Room 5061
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Exclusion of Trinity River Watershed From CALFED

Dear Senator Johannessen:

Trinity County requests the assistance of your committee in stimulating appropriate CALFED interest in the Trinity River watershed.

The Trinity River watershed has contributed an annual average of 1 million acre-feet of high quality fresh water to the Delta for 34 years. It is therefore a significant component of the streamflow-dependent Bay-Delta ecosystem, recognized as such by Proposition 204, which declared the Trinity River a "delta tributary watershed", and by the language of the Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, and Flood Protection Act (A.B. 254) proposed this year, which explicitly defined the "bay-delta" as including the Trinity River.

Further evidence of the relationship between the Trinity River and the Delta is shown in the attached map which graphically demonstrates that damming the Trinity River allowed the Bureau of Reclamation to expand the Central Valley Project Place of Use in the western San Joaquin Valley, south of the Delta.

The annual removal of an average 1 million acre-feet of water has brought about catastrophic ecological changes in the Trinity River watershed, which produces an average total of 1.2 million acre-feet per year at the point of diversion at Lewiston Dam. These changes include 80-90% declines in anadromous fish populations. Trinity River coho salmon are now listed under the federal Endangered Species Act as "threatened," and our steelhead are a candidate species.

Because CALFED proposes to develop a comprehensive plan for restoration of the entire Bay-Delta System, and because CALFED advertises that its comprehensive plan must and will be "equitable" ("Solutions will focus on solving problems in all problem areas. Improvement for some problems will not be made without corresponding improvements for other problems."), it seems clear that CALFED must attend to problems associated with the continuing massive diversion of Trinity River water to the Bay-Delta. Inexplicably, however, CALFED's Draft EIS/EIR, Watershed Management Strategy, and Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan (ERPP) entirely omit the Trinity River basin from maps that delineate the Delta watershed and the "problem", "solution", and even "study" areas for CALFED Program effort.

We have twice written the executive director of CALFED asking that this deficiency in CALFED's perspective be rectified (copies attached), but have received no reply. After a March 13, 1998 presentation to CALFED's Ecosystem Roundtable by Trinity County representatives, Roundtable participants voted unanimously to urge CALFED to include the Trinity River basin in the area eligible for Ecosystem Restoration Program activities. The geographic scope for the second Ecosystem Restoration Program Request for Proposals was amended at the last minute to include the Trinity basin; however, we are told that proposals from the Trinity River basin are not being funded because there is no relationship between the Trinity River and the Delta. Since then, a geographic scope for the Watershed Program has been developed by CALFED which intentionally excludes the Trinity basin. The Watershed Work Group of the Bay-Delta Advisory Committee (BDAC) voted without dissent on September 2 to urge CALFED to include the Trinity River watershed; CALFED has not responded as of this writing.

It does not seem reasonable for CALFED to exclude an important source of Delta water from restoration attention, particularly when the massive diversion for the benefit of the Delta is the indisputable largest cause of well-documented problems in the Trinity River basin. It is not prudent for CALFED to continue to neglect the Trinity's problems; if these problems are not treated by the variety of non-hydraulic methods possible, they will eventually need to be treated by larger amounts of Trinity River water than would otherwise be necessary, at the expense of the Delta water supply. We hope that your committee can persuade CALFED that exclusion of the Trinity is inconsistent with CALFED's Mission and Principles, and that addressing Trinity River problems is in CALFED's interest.

It is also important to point out that Trinity River basin tributary and watershed restoration funding under the Trinity River Basin Fish and Wildlife Management Program (P.L. 98-541) expires at the end of this month. The program was not reauthorized by Congress partly because the Interior Department, one of the CALFED lead agencies, did not support reauthorization efforts by the Trinity River Task Force. This significant source of funding for non-flow restoration of Trinity River tributaries and watersheds will cease to exist, thereby increasing the need for funding through other sources such as CALFED. If Trinity River basin non-flow restoration measures cannot be implemented at a reasonable scale, the only logical alternative to restore Trinity River fisheries is to substantially increase Trinity River instream flows and correspondingly decrease Trinity River exports to the Delta.

Sincerely,

TRINITY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



Ralph Modine, Chairman

Attachments: Oct. 22, 1997 and Feb. 6, 1998 letters to Lester Snow
May 19, 1998 comments on CALFED Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR
One Way that CALFED Investment in the Trinity River Basin
Benefit to the Delta Fresh Water Supply
Exhibit TRINCO 17 for Bay-Delta Water Rights Hearings - CVP
POU With and Without the Trinity River Division of the CVP

Copies to: Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
Representative Wally Herger
Representative Frank Riggs
Representative George Miller
Senator Mike Thompson
Assemblyman Tom Woods
Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt
David Hayes, Counselor to the Interior Secretary
Resource Agency Secretary Douglas Wheeler
Lester Snow, CALFED Executive Director
Bay-Delta Advisory Council