



**CONTRA COSTA
WATER DISTRICT**

1331 Concord Avenue
P.O. Box H20
Concord, CA 94524
(925) 688-8000 FAX (925) 688-8122

98-452

December 11, 1998

Directors

Joseph L. Campbell
President

James Pretti
Vice President

Elizabeth R. Anello
Bette Boatman
Noble O. Elcenko, D.C.

Walter J. Bishop
General Manager

Mr. Lester Snow
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Continuous Improvement of South and Central Delta Water Quality

Dear Mr. ^{Lester} Snow:

Contra Costa Water District has determined that many of the actions being discussed for CALFED's Phase II program for fish restoration, including some of the actions in the Anadromous Fish Restoration Plan (AFRP) under the CVPIA Section 3404(b)(2) can have a serious impact on water quality at Contra Costa Water District's intakes, on the performance of the Los Vaqueros Project and on the District's ability to meet its water quality goal. This in turn can affect the District's ability to use the Los Vaqueros Project to provide environmental benefits for the Delta. The actions that can result in degraded water quality include shifts in pumping and outflows as well as prolonged closure of the Delta cross-channel under low flow and high salinity intrusion periods.

In some recent CALFED discussions of these water quality issues, these impacts have sometimes been dismissed using the "if the standard is met, there is no impact" argument. However, degradation of water quality, particularly in the South and Central Delta, is not consistent with the important concept of continuous improvement in water quality. Degradation does not constitute improvement and certainly allowing salinity to rise up to an existing standard is not improvement. To provide for continuous improvement of water quality, the CALFED preferred alternative must not allow a "dip" in water quality, but must show real continuous improvements from the Record of Decision; this can be achieved through water quality common program actions, operational changes and other CALFED short-term and long-term actions..

Some of the new water developed as part of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program Stage 1 and longer-term actions can and should be used to improve water quality in periods of greatest salinity intrusion (generally the months of fall and early winter). Improving in-Delta water quality during this period will provide the greatest benefit to Delta water users, including the Contra Costa Water District and other urban agencies

Mr. Lester Snow
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
December 11, 1998
Page 2

diverting from the south and central Delta. Better water quality will mean reduced salt load to the San Joaquin River (which in turn improves Delta water quality), improved water quality to in-Delta agricultural users, improved water quality for urban agencies and greater flexibility for the Contra Costa Water District and other users to provide more benefits for Delta fisheries.

In summary, it is imperative that all three areas, water quality, water supply and the ecosystem, benefit from continuous improvement in Stage 1. One are should not suffer at the expense of another. There are great opportunities to achieve this with a balanced CALFED program. If you have any questions, please contact me at (925) 688-8034 or Dr. Gregory Gartrell at (925) 688-8100.

Sincerely,



Walter J. Bishop
General Manager

cc: Tim Quinn
Walt Wadlow
Dan Nelson
Tom Clark