

99-172

RECLAMATION DISTRICT NO. 784
1594 Broadway
Marysville, California 95901-9632
Phone (530) 742-0520 Fax (530) 742-3021

June 15, 1999

Lester Snow, Executive Director
CALFED
1416 Ninth Street, S-1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Snow:

Flood control is a critical public safety and economic security issue in the Yuba-Feather River Basin. This is the most serious issue that we face because of the potential to destroy lives, property, and our community's economic well being. Since 1955, flooding has claimed 42 lives. The 1986 and 1997 floods took 4 lives, damaged or destroyed 5,045 homes and businesses, flooded 26,700 acres and cost hundreds of millions of dollars. The future stakes are high as the 1997 flood event caused 100,000 people to evacuate from the Yuba-Sutter region and their property represents \$4 billion in assessed value. The probability of a flood disaster is also high as the Yuba-Feather River Basin has a current flood risk of a 39% chance of flooding in a 50 year period.

Flood control is a passion with roots deep in our history. Until June 14, 1999, we did not realize that Yuba Tools had a chance of obtaining CALFED funding. As stakeholders for our communities facing this horrendous flood risk, we cannot support the proposed Yuba Tools and strongly urge CALFED not to fund this request for the following reasons:

The proposal does not demonstrate local support or involvement for the project, including participation by the appropriate local governments as called for in the CALFED proposal guidelines. No major local stakeholder, representing residents at risk to valley flooding, supports Yuba Tools. This includes Yuba County, City of Marysville, Reclamation District 784 and the Yuba County Water Agency. The flood control entity representing the majority of Yuba County residents at risk to flooding, Reclamation District 784, was never contacted nor given a copy of Yuba Tools by SYRCL. Also, the Yuba County Water Agency, the local government entity that has the mission of improving flood protection in Yuba County, was not given a copy of the proposal by SYRCL until April 27, 1999, a full 11 days after the CALFED proposal deadline. The proposal implies local involvement when it isn't actually there. For example Yuba County Water Agency and Yuba County are listed as cooperating agencies under Appendix C when they have not said they would be a cooperating agency. We are concerned that other entities similarly listed. Also, Yuba Tools collaborators and participants does not include any entities with flood control responsibilities.

The proposal does not identify local groups in the at risk flood area and indicate their level of support or opposition. The Yuba Sutter Flood Control Committee and the landowners affected by potential levee setbacks and facilities relocations, were either not named or their level of support is not indicated. The Sutter Flood Control Committee does not endorse Yuba Tools.

The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) sells Yuba Tools as a stakeholder based collaborative process when they have not demonstrated this at a local valley stakeholder level. SYRCL has not demonstrated good stakeholder involvement or cooperative effort with the Yuba County Water Agency or Reclamation District 784. Shawn Garvey did not show up at the meeting he scheduled with the YCWA to cover Yuba Tools. Also, SYRCL expressed concern about the YCWA flood study results but never took the time to meet with YCWA on their issues. This was after two months of multiple YCWA offers, to meet with SYRCL and their suggested guests to discuss the flood study process and reasons for the screening of flood control elements. It is interesting to note that SYRCL's Decommissioning of Englebright CALFED proposal was shelved for lack of local support.

Funding Yuba Tools would duplicate YCWA flood control study and be a wasteful use of taxpayers' money. YCWA's \$700,000 Supplemental Flood Control Study has looked at all flood control options developed by the YCWA technical team and introduced by the public. Considerable effort and technical expertise went into formulating the flood control options, yet SYRCL has not taken the time to meet with YCWA and its consultants to learn what has been studied and the reasons behind the screening process which would be valuable information for formulating Yuba Tools.

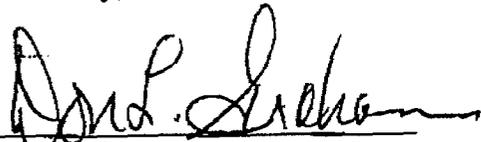
CALFED's policy does not consider flood control issues outside of the Delta. Dick Daniels at the June 1, 1999 Yuba City Town Hall meeting, said that CALFED does not consider flood control issues outside the Delta. This was in response to Larry Combs, Sutter County Administrator, expressed shock that CALFED was not considering flood control options in Yuba and Sutter Counties. Funding of Yuba Tools would go against this stated policy.

Yuba Tools contains some misleading and erroneous information. One of several examples is that Yuba Tools says that "Current flood control studies have failed to identify numerous non-dam alternatives for flood control and ecosystem restoration being successfully undertaken in other California watersheds. Tools such as upstream watershed management prescriptions, re-operation of existing facilities, relocation of existing facilities outside of the floodplain, purchase of floodplain easements, trans-basin diversions, flood bypasses, levee raises and set-backs, and dredging has been overlooked." The YCWA flood study has addressed these issues and preliminary findings were shared at our January 28, 1999, which SYRCL attended. YCWA has offered SYRCL a special meeting to explain the screening of each of the alternatives and they have not taken the time to meet with YCWA.

Furthermore, because of YCWA's commitment to public input and concern, YCWA has added several options such as channel capacity increases back into the alternatives recommended for the next phase of study. Phase two of the YCWA study performed initial screening based on an flood control alternative's ability to be affordable and reduce the flood risk. Phase III screening will include environmental review. The YCWA Supplemental Flood Control Study Phase II Report will be available after June 24, 1999.

We appreciate your consideration of this matter and if there are any questions, please contact Curt Aikens at the YCWA at 530-741-6278.

Sincerely,



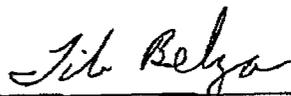
Don L. Graham
Board Member, Reclamation District 784



Jerry Crippen
Mayor of Yuba City



Bill Simmons
Chairman, Yuba County Board of Supervisors



Tib Belza
Chairman, Yuba County Water Agency



Dan Logue
Chairman, Yuba- Sutter Flood Control Committee