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January 28, 1999

Honorable Gray Davis  
Governor  
State of California  
300 Capital Mall, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814-4341

Dear Governor:

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is encouraged by the interest that your office has shown for the complex and important CalFed Bay-Delta project. SCAG is a major stakeholder in the Bay-Delta process and our region will be heavily influenced by the eventual outcome of the project. We recognize the progress that has been made by CalFed over the last few years and we applaud this. However, on behalf of the SCAG membership I would like to convey to you initial concerns the Association has regarding the Bay-Delta project and its implications for southern California.

As you are aware, CalFed has published the Bay-Delta Revised Phase II Report that identifies the "Preferred Alternative" for the Bay-Delta project. This report consists of the policy framework by which CalFed intends to pursue an eventual Bay-Delta solution. We are concerned with CalFed's proposed policy framework, and the lack of definitive processes and assurances that we feel are necessary to maintain the region's economic vitality and quality of life. The areas of concern are detailed in the attachment to this letter.

Water issues are critical to the long term success of our region and California's economy. Our goal is to provide you with a southern California urban water users perspective on the Bay-Delta process. SCAG is pleased to be a stakeholder in the Bay-Delta project and will continue to work with CalFed in the pursuit of mutually beneficial solutions.

We are available to assist you in developing agreeable solutions for southern California's water issues, and those for the state as a whole. We appreciate this opportunity to share our concerns with you.

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**Ventura County Transportation Commission:** Bill Davis, Simi Valley

If you require additional information, please call Rich Macias, of my staff, at (213) 236-1805. On behalf of SCAG, we wish you continued success, and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*Bob Bartlett*

Robert T. Bartlett  
Regional Council President  
Southern California Association of Governments

cc: Lester Snow, Exec. Director, CalFed

Attachment

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
CALFED BAY-DELTA PROJECT CONCERNS  
ATTACHMENT**

**PROPOSED STAGING APPROACH**

CalFed has developed a very complex staging approach for the Bay-Delta solution. We are concerned that this staging approach will be a prolonged labor-intensive process that may delay decisions and skew the focus on long term solutions, especially those that will benefit southern California. We are interested in streamlining the decision-making process and maintaining the ability to establish strong assurances that southern California's interests are met.

The proposed staging approach also raises concerns regarding the regulatory and entitlement processes necessary for program and project implementation. It is strongly recommended that detailed feasibility studies, environmental analyses and reviews, and in particular, necessary permits, be conducted as early as is practicable during Stage I, to save time, resources, and to expedite project implementation wherever possible.

**WATER QUALITY ISSUES**

The proposed Stage I actions, though comprehensive in scope, are top heavy with environmental restoration, and other such programs. SCAG applauds the CalFed commitment to environmental quality and habitat restoration. However, additional focus is needed on directly improving water quality in Stage I. The most critical concern that our region has with respect to the Bay-Delta project is the quality of water that will be available for export. It is imperative to the State and our region, that water quality initiatives and programs be increased, and given the highest of priority in Phase I, and throughout the Bay-Delta project implementation phases.

**PROJECT COSTS AND FINANCING**

While the Stage II Report details an extensive cost and subsequent financing programs for the project, we note that projected cost estimates are preliminary and subject to further refinement. However, we recommend that strict controls be in place for establishing firm and reliable cost estimates for all stages of the project.

We support in concept the "beneficiary pays" philosophy proposed by CalFed. The Stage II Report indicates that although this philosophy is to be paramount, project benefits, beneficiaries, and associated costs and user fees remain to be developed. We understand that this will be a very difficult methodology to process. However, we recommend that all financing methodologies be developed with extensive stakeholder input, and that fair-share and equitable cost allocation and financing programs be proposed.

## **WATER CONSERVATION**

Southern California maintains some of the most progressive water conservation programs in the nation. We are impressed with the emphasis that the Stage II Report gives to such initiatives, and recognize the continued need for such programs in our region. However, we are concerned that water conservation programs throughout the state are not well balanced, and that a system of equitable credit for water conservation efforts be established and implemented, so that southern California may receive the credit and recognition that it deserves.

Progressive and innovative conservation efforts should be encouraged throughout the state. Cleaner agriculture is a form of water conservation. The feasibility of "organic" horticulture, and other "clean" farming practices should be analyzed for feasibility in Phase I. We would also encourage community based conservation efforts that focus on water efficient infrastructure through "livable- community" concepts in both urban, and suburban environments.

## **DELTA CONVEYANCE**

We recognize the current and historic issues related to developing an "isolated facility" that would divert water from the Delta region. SCAG has forecast an increase of 6 million residents in southern California by 2020. In addition to this, over 16 million residents, and a strong 500 million dollar regional economy depend on a quality, affordable, and reliable water supply. These are staggering statistics that our region and the State as a whole have to accept. Nothing will impede this future growth in our region. Because we are faced with this dilemma, it is important to our region that all feasible alternatives be seriously evaluated.

We recommend that CalFed continue to objectively evaluate the feasibility of the "isolated facility" alternative, as well as off-stream water storage facilities. Previous CalFed analysis indicates that these alternatives will provide positive water quality, wildlife, and environmental benefits, and thus should not be ignored. We recommend that these alternatives be expedited and analyzed to the fullest extent possible in the Programmatic EIS/EIR, and beyond in Phase-I implementation.

We would also like to bring to your attention that Federal Clean Water Act standards will soon be revised. We anticipate that it will be difficult to comply with stricter standards, and believe that the "isolated facility" alternative is best suited to addressing long term and reliable water quality improvement and maintenance of transferable waters.

## **ASSURANCES**

Our region is concerned with equity. Any CalFed solution must result in assurances that all components of the project will provide regional, as well as statewide benefits in an equitable manner. A balanced approach is essential. Environmental considerations, infrastructure development, "soft and hard" solutions, must be objectively evaluated, selected, and implemented for the benefit of all, but with a priority and focus on improving water quality, and providing a reliable water supply.