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SAN DIEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY

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February 6, 1999

Lester Snow, Executive Director
CalFed Bay/Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1135
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Snow:

We are disappointed that none of the CalFed workshops on urban water conservation will be held in the San Diego area. We would have liked to have learned more of the candidate proposals to allow us to more fully comment on them with respect to the needs and concerns of our region. In San Diego we are at the end of the pipe with respect to water sources. No matter how hard the State tries to wring water out of the Delta and the Colorado River there will not be enough to meet our expanding population, industrial, and agricultural needs, with our current gluttonous appetites for water, even with modest conservation efforts. When emergency shortages eventually occur, increases in extraction will further threaten the water needed for wildlife and for ecosystem health. Instead we need to be aggressively reducing our total consumption to allow more water for wildlife and habitat and more water security for our region.

Innovative and aggressive conservation measures are absolutely required. These must be implemented in a very strong, on-going, comprehensive conservation program including substantial investment, analysis, research and development, planning, infrastructure, agency responsibility, incentives, and enforcement, and without loopholes. The means to do so is available, but will require some adjustments. Such a program should take into account that surface water storage and transport are very heavy, but non-productive, water uses due to the amounts of water lost to evaporation.

We urge that you adopt the Environmental Water Caucus's proposal as a positive step in the right direction. We urge you to reject the weaker and loophole-ridden proposal of the Kern County and Bear Valley water districts. We appreciated the January 28 hearing in San Diego and look forward to future CalFed workshops and hearings in our region. A presentation on the Conservation Program here would be especially useful.

Sincerely,

James A. Peugh
Coastal and Wetlands Conservation Chair



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