

submitted to the
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March 25, 1999

Bakersfield

COMMENTS FOR BAY-DELTA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
Bakersfield, California - March 25, 1999
Holiday Inn Select, Ballroom - 801 Truxtun Ave. - 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

As President of the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD), I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment regarding the water management strategy and the CalFed Bay-Delta Program. We have 103 RCDs (Districts) in California (see attached map). Their boundaries encompass 80% of the State. They work at the local level with local landowners to address resource needs and are able to achieve measurable improvements and advances in resource management, in partnership with existing State and Federal agencies and with local groups, without additional property rights restrictions or regulatory control. They are committed to voluntary, cooperative, collaborative, incentive-based efforts. CARCD and Districts support the watershed management approach, the Coordinated Resource Management and Planning (CRMP) process involving local stakeholders, and the grass roots, bottom up, locally led approach.

We feel that working on a watershed basis provides a more unified approach and allows for many stakeholder groups to become involved and help to work out strategies and plans leading to implementation of projects that have a broader base of support. We all live in watersheds and our watersheds are important to agriculture and to industry, to rural as well as urban areas. Healthy watersheds contribute to a healthy environment and economy.

We support the idea of local watershed coordinators (as described on page 87 in the Clean Water Action Plan) to lead these watershed community work group efforts, and, in our opinion, these watershed coordinators need to live and work in the local community and need to know not only the on-the-ground watershed resources but also the people who live within the watershed. Some RCDs already have local watershed coordinators in place working in this manner and have some very successful project implementation underway. We believe that the watershed approach could be of great value for the Cal-Fed, Bay-Delta process.

The Working Group of the Watershed Protection and Restoration Council (WPRC), set up by Governor Wilson, has completed some reports (the latest one in November, 1998) showing the value and importance of the commitment and leadership from those who live and work in the watershed. Page 27 of the November report states, "Clearly the most effective watershed groups are those with locally-hired coordinators," and goes on to state the need to provide direct state and federal funding to support the hiring and training of watershed coordinators throughout the state. Perhaps some of the CalFed program funding could be focused on such efforts. I believe that development of a statewide watershed management strategy would be of great value, and RCDs could be of great assistance in this effort. Another quote from the WPRC report states "The 'White Hat' (non-regulatory) agencies such as UCCE (University of California Cooperative Extension), NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service), and RCDs have usually developed a trustworthy relationship with local landowners and, therefore, can provide

the best opportunity for initially engaging and working with them in watershed planning management. These agencies' popular reputations often enable them to be the sponsor or facilitator of local cooperative watershed groups, and their expertise cannot afford to be lost due to inadequate budgets." Such local watershed groups would also play a key role in watershed assessment and monitoring efforts. It is our belief that participation in community-based watershed efforts must be voluntary and must avoid the "top-down" approach.

In conclusion, we believe that development of a statewide watershed management strategy is important and that since RCDs are located in all parts of the state and are the logical focal point for coordinating local, State and Federal efforts they could be of great assistance to the Cal-Fed, Bay-Delta process. Please feel free to contact me or our Executive Director, Tom Wehri, to learn more about RCDs and their ability to help. Our CARCD office address is:

801 K Street, Suite 1318
Sacramento, California 95814
(916)-447-7237 FAX (916)-447-2532

My address is: Donna Thomas
8158 Panorama Trail
Inyokern, California, 93527-2036
Phone and FAX: (760) 377-4525

Thank you for this opportunity to give input to the CalFed Bay-Delta Program. I am sorry that I am not able to attend today's meeting, but I hope that these written comments will prove useful to the Bay-Delta Advisory Council.

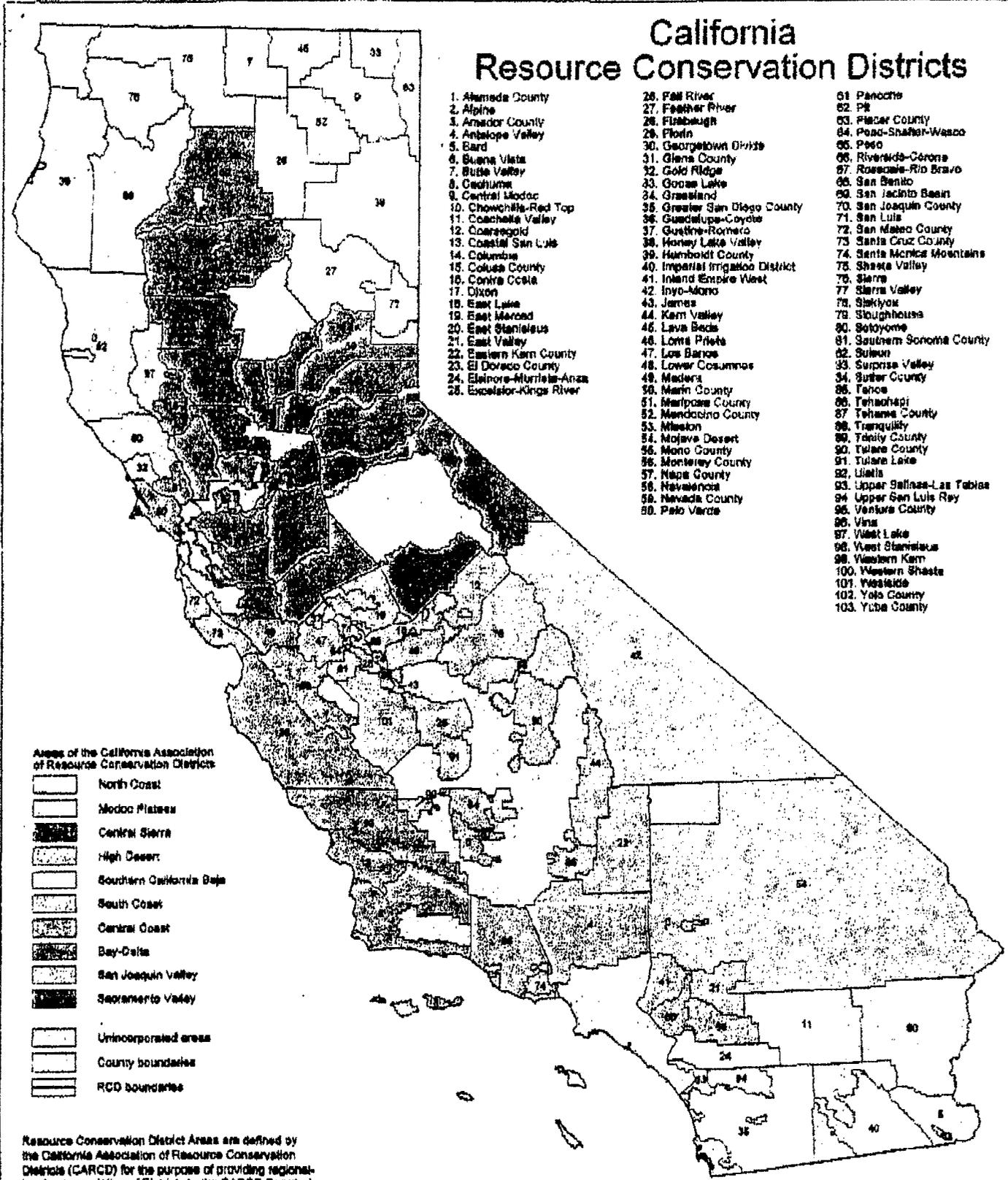
Sincerely,

Donna C. Thomas

Donna Thomas, President, California Association of
Resource Conservation Districts
Director on local board of Eastern Kern
County RCD

California Resource Conservation Districts

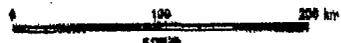
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|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Alameda County | 26. Fall River | 61. Placente |
| 2. Alpine | 27. Feather River | 62. Pl |
| 3. Amador County | 28. Flabough | 63. Placer County |
| 4. Antelope Valley | 29. Florin | 64. Poso-Shafter-Wasco |
| 5. Bard | 30. Georgetown District | 65. Paso |
| 6. Buena Vista | 31. Glenn County | 66. Riversides-Corona |
| 7. Butte Valley | 32. Gold Ridge | 67. Rosedale-Rio Bravo |
| 8. Cachuma | 33. Goose Lake | 68. San Benito |
| 9. Central Modoc | 34. Grassland | 69. San Jacinto Basin |
| 10. Chowchilla-Red Top | 35. Greater San Diego County | 70. San Joaquin County |
| 11. Coachella Valley | 36. Guadalupe-Coyote | 71. San Luis |
| 12. Coarsgold | 37. Gustine-Romero | 72. San Mateo County |
| 13. Coastal San Luis | 38. Honey Lake Valley | 73. Santa Cruz County |
| 14. Columbus | 39. Humboldt County | 74. Santa Monica Mountains |
| 15. Colusa County | 40. Imperial Irrigation District | 75. Shasta Valley |
| 16. Contra Costa | 41. Inland Empire West | 76. Sierra |
| 17. Dixon | 42. Inyo-Mono | 77. Sierra Valley |
| 18. East Lake | 43. James | 78. Siskiyou |
| 19. East Merced | 44. Kern Valley | 79. Sloughhouse |
| 20. East Stanislaus | 45. Lava Beds | 80. Sotoyome |
| 21. East Valley | 46. Loma Prieta | 81. Southern Sonoma County |
| 22. Eastern Kern County | 47. Los Banos | 82. Suisun |
| 23. El Dorado County | 48. Lower Cosumnes | 83. Surprise Valley |
| 24. Elmore-Murrain-Anza | 49. Madras | 84. Sutter County |
| 25. Excelsior-Kings River | 50. Marin County | 85. Tanco |
| | 51. Mariposa County | 86. Tehachapi |
| | 52. Mendocino County | 87. Tehama County |
| | 53. Mission | 88. Tenipuku |
| | 54. Mojave Desert | 89. Trinity County |
| | 55. Mono County | 90. Tulare County |
| | 56. Monterey County | 91. Tulare Lake |
| | 57. Napa County | 92. Ulaia |
| | 58. Navalencia | 93. Upper Saffins-Las Tablas |
| | 59. Nevada County | 94. Upper San Luis Rey |
| | 60. Palo Verde | 95. Ventura County |
| | | 96. Vina |
| | | 97. West Lake |
| | | 98. West Stanislaus |
| | | 99. Western Kern |
| | | 100. Western Shasta |
| | | 101. Westside |
| | | 102. Yolo County |
| | | 103. Yuba County |



Areas of the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts

- North Coast
- Modoc Plateaus
- Central Sierra
- High Desert
- Southern California Basin
- South Coast
- Central Coast
- Bay-Delta
- San Joaquin Valley
- Sacramento Valley
- Unincorporated area
- County boundaries
- RCD boundaries

Resource Conservation District Areas are defined by the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) for the purpose of providing regional-level representation of Districts to the CARCD Board of Directors. The CARCD Board of Directors provides leadership for the Association as an instrument of its member Districts in carrying out state-level soil and water conservation policies. The Association also provides policy input to state and federal agencies and to other conservation and agricultural organizations. The boundaries of individual Districts and CARCD Areas represented on this map reflect all changes to January 1, 1998.



Map compiled and produced by the California Department of Conservation, Lead Conservator Unit. Sources for Resource Conservation District (RCD) boundaries and RCD Areas include the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service; individual RCD offices; and the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts. County lines produced by the Department of Conservation. Political Mapping and Monitoring Program from United States Geological Survey 1:100,000 scale topographic quadrangle maps. Copyright (c) 1998, California Department of Conservation. The Department of Conservation makes no warranties as to the suitability of this product for any particular purpose.