

DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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September 29, 1997

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

Dear Lester:

Subject: CALFED Common Program Elements

You have requested comments on the "Common Program" elements of the CALFED program. CDFA staff have participated in the CALFED planning process and have raised several issues concerning the Common Program. We appreciate this opportunity to summarize these.

General comments:

1. CALFED is preparing an EIR on its program, under the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA requires that the EIR consider "the whole of the action." However, the Common Program elements are not being subjected to the requirements of CEQA, and some have in fact been written in essentially final form prior to environmental review. The CDFA and others have identified very significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the Common Programs, especially the Ecosystem Restoration elements. It is essential that the actions contemplated under the common programs, and especially the Ecosystem Restoration actions be subjected to the requirements of CEQA, specifically for a reasonable range of alternatives and the avoidance and mitigation of significant impacts at the programmatic level, in the forum of the Programmatic EIR.
2. CALFED has adopted the solution principals of the Governor's water policy as principals for the program. However, the Common Program elements of the CALFED program clearly do not meet these principals in the treatment of agricultural land and water use.

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As the State agency responsible for the protection of California agriculture, the CDFA is very concerned about CALFED's treatment of the rare and unique environmental resources which are the foundation for California's diverse and productive agriculture. We remain available to assist CALFED in planning a long-term program under the solution principals, and preparing an EIR which meets the requirements of CEQA.

Sincerely,



A.J. Yates
Undersecretary