

DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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JUL 01 1998

June 30, 1998

Mr. Lester Snow, Director
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1155
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Snow:

In reference to the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (PEIS/R) for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program (State Clearinghouse Number 96032083), the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) offers the following comments.

The CDFA is the responsible state agency charged to preserve and protect agricultural environmental resources. The agricultural environmental resources of California are among the most important and rare environmental resources of this State and Nation.

- * Impacts on agricultural environmental resources warrant careful analysis and full public disclosure. A thorough discussion of strategies to avoid, reduce and mitigate potential impacts must be part of the PEIS/R to meet the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Given the guidance provided by CDFA to CALFED over the past eighteen months, and if that guidance has been heeded, we fully expect that the PEIS/R will in fact be adequate for the purposes of CEQA.

While the CDFA is not formally a CALFED agency, we have been a part of the CALFED "family," providing staff support and participating fully on the CALFED Management Team and Policy Group. I fully appreciate and acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of you and your staff which has resulted in such significant progress to date. The CALFED process can and must work to comprehensively address the significant issues facing the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the water users it serves. The CDFA will continue to support CALFED as it moves towards developing and implementing a successful program.

Sincerely,

A. J. Yates
Undersecretary