



September 22, 1999

Rick Breitenbach
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Breitenbach:

Now is the time to charge the true costs of supplying water from Sierra Nevada counties to urban and agricultural users.

In the past the Central Valley Project never allocated the full development and maintenance cost of supplying water as has been well-documented by Marc Reisner's book, *Cadillac Desert*. And that was true without considering the ecological costs to the watersheds.

Tim Duane in *Shaping the Sierra*, points out that the well-being of the forests is crucial to the quality and quantity of water available, so that we must now link the water users of California to watershed restoration and stewardship programs.

Total value of the Feather River water is between \$677 million and \$1.9 billion per year, yet not a single dollar is returned on a regular basis to the upper watersheds.

A flat fee of \$8 per acre-foot would generate \$160 million in revenue (Policy and Implementation Planning Team 1994). A 10 % tax on hydroelectric power would generate an additional \$65 million per year.

Any fees could be collected through existing water and power bills.

The end result would be to internalize watershed maintenance/restoration costs and pass it on to the beneficiaries. This additional cost could lead to more efficient use of water and conservation. Moving and storing water is far more expensive than conserving water, and it doesn't create water like conservation.

Don Rivenes
Sierra Foothills Audubon Society

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