



San Joaquin River Group

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- Modesto Irrigation District
- Turlock Irrigation District
- Oakdale Irrigation District
- Merced Irrigation District
- Friant Water Users Authority
- City and County of San Francisco
- South San Joaquin Irrigation District
- San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors

February 23, 2004

Jeremy Arrich
DWR, DPLA
PO Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

RE: Draft In-Delta Storage Program State Feasibility Study

Dear Mr. Arrich:

The San Joaquin River Group Authority (SJRGA) supports continued development of the In-Delta Storage Program, originally conceived as the Delta Wetlands Project. We see it as a positive component of a balanced program for enhancing flexibility in California's water management and enhancing Delta habitat.

This project has been thoroughly considered in a variety of public processes including compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act. Its operation has been conditioned by its Biological Opinions, the terms of its State Water Resource Control Board permit, the Final Operating Criteria and agreements protecting drinking water quality with the California Urban Water Agencies, Contra Costa Water District, and East Bay Municipal Water District. It has completed most of its permitting requirements, including approval under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, Section 10 of the Rivers and harbors Act, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act. The Draft State Feasibility Report incorporates various "re-engineered" features of the project, and addresses issues raised in prior studies. It concludes that the project is technically feasible and that it "could provide a variety of benefits and contribute to meeting each of CALFED's four objectives for water supply reliability, water quality, ecosystem restoration, and levee system integrity." This important conclusion is based on a thorough understanding of the project and application of the best available science.

The SJRGA supports continued efforts to develop and implement water storage projects within California. California needs additional options for water storage and the Delta needs additional water in order to balance the competing needs exports, water quality, and the environment. Implementation of such projects is necessary to providing the operational flexibility required to satisfy these competing needs.

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The proponents of this project have been forthright in their effort to develop a project that minimizes environmental impacts while maintaining a viable project. We believe this is the type of project that California urgently needs to assist in meeting its rapidly growing water demands.

We urge that in its consideration of the allocation of Proposition 50 funds, the California Bay Delta Authority allocate funds to the continued development of the In-Delta Storage Program including the scoping and execution of additional environmental review.

Sincerely,



Allen Short
Coordinator

CC: Mr. Patrick Wright, Executive Director
California Bay Delta Authority
SJRG