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**Agenda Item: 6**  
**Meeting Date: March 15, 2006**

## **CALIFORNIA BAY-DELTA PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **SCIENCE PRIORITIES AND PROCESS FOR UPCOMING PROPOSAL SOLICITATION PACKAGE AND CALFED SCIENCE FELLOWS SOLICITATIONS**

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**Description:** The CALFED Science Program has refined two tools used to identify and fill high priority gaps in scientific knowledge in support of CALFED management needs. The Science Program Proposal Solicitation Package has been streamlined (focused) to address high priorities faster. Secondly, the CALFED Science Fellows Program has been refined to include specific projects identified by implementing agency scientists in addition to the research topic priorities articulated for the Focused PSP.

**Recommended Action:** This is an information item only.

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One of the main goals of the CALFED Science Program is to increase technical and scientific understanding of the Bay-Delta system in support of CALFED-wide water supply and ecosystem management. Two important tools the Science Program uses to meet this objective are the Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) and the CALFED Science Fellows Program. Based on funding limitations and concerns about timeliness and responsiveness to high priorities, the Lead Scientist and Science Program staff have streamlined the previous solicitation processes and focused the efforts on implementing agency priorities, while maintaining competitive and scientifically credible processes.

Cross-Program knowledge gaps and management needs will be identified based on input from participants in and products from recent and ongoing public efforts such as the Interagency Ecological Program Pelagic Organism Decline Synthesis Report and Workplan Review, Environmental Water Account Technical Workshop, Technical Review of the Biological Opinion of the Long-term Operation of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, Mercury workshop, Delta Science Panel, and Delta Risk Management Strategy. The Lead Scientist and staff will refine these topics into reasonable research questions well suited to the PSP or Fellows Program.

### **Focused PSP**

The Science Program plans to conduct an annual Focused PSP that will solicit for, identify, and fund only those proposals that are of the highest priority to the CALFED community. Unlike the 2004 Science Program PSP, which originally earmarked \$18 million to cover a broad array of CALFED needs and research questions, this Focused PSP will include \$6 million to cover between three and five tightly focused research topics. The review period for submitted proposals has been greatly accelerated without sacrificing its rigorous nature.

These tightly focused research topics will be chosen from the overall list of refined research questions by a Selection Panel prior to release of the PSP. Additionally, the Selection Panel will apportion the \$6 million available among the final research topics. The Selection Panel will be chaired by the Lead Scientist and composed of stakeholders, independent scientists, and CALFED implementing agency staff. The Selection Panel recommendations, which will be incorporated into the guidelines for the Focused PSP, will be open for public input followed by approval by funding agencies.

Proposals submitted in response to the Focused PSP will undergo a rigorous technical review consisting of three external scientific reviews followed by a Technical Synthesis Panel. The Technical Synthesis Panel will be composed of scientific experts and chaired by the Lead scientist. The Technical Synthesis Panel will use the external scientific reviews to rate proposals based on their technical merit. The best technical proposals within the dollar amount allocated to each research topic area will be recommended for funding. No inadequate proposals will be funded.

### **CALFED Science Fellows**

The Science Fellows Program is an annual program that brings together junior scientists, CALFED Program agency scientists and senior research mentors in collaborative data analysis and research projects relevant to ecosystem management and water supply reliability questions. As with the PSP, this year's Fellows solicitation will narrow its scope to better address management and information priorities. The Call for Proposals will use priority research topics identified by the topic selection process as described above. In addition, the potential Fellow candidates will be able to choose from specific research projects identified scientists from CALFED by implementing agencies. This is an enhancement to past Science Fellows solicitation processes. By identifying the specific priority project gaps upfront, the solicitation increases the likelihood of providing the agencies with the technically rigorous information needed to support program and management decisions.

Approximately \$1.5 million will be available to fund between six to eight Science Fellows for a three-year period. A Science Fellows Technical Selection panel chaired by the Lead Scientist will peer review proposals and identify successful Fellows.

**Agenda Item: 6**  
**Meeting Date: March 15, 2006**  
**Page 3**

**List of Attachments**

Attachment 1 – 2006 Focused PSP and Science Fellows Draft Schedule

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