

## Geographic Review Panel 1 – Bay Delta

**Proposal number:** 2001–G205    **Short Proposal Title:** Rice in the Delta: A Pilot Project to Convert 10,000 Acres of Legal Delta Lands to Rice Production

**1. Applicability to CALFED ERP Goals and Implementation Plan and CVPIA priorities, and relevance to ERP and CVPIA priorities for your region.** The proposal identifies Goal 4 - Habitat applicability. Other ERP goals may indirectly benefit. Reversing subsidence is an important regional goal.

**2. Linkages/coordination with previously funded projects or other restoration activities in your region.** This appears to be the first attempt to scientifically and economically assess the feasibility of converting delta organic soils from corn to rice production to reduce subsidence.

**3. Feasibility, especially the project’s ability to move forward in a timely and successful manner.** This proposal seems very ambitious. Panel recommends conducting evaluation on first phase of project (Brack tract) by a research entity to evaluate whether this could be a successful approach for subsidence and wildlife benefits. Evaluation should be on a time-scale appropriate to measure subsidence rates. There are concerns about the success of a “pilot” project of this scale (10,000 acres) and timing (1,000 acres first year planting, jumping to 5,000 acres the second year). Need permission for access once willing landowners are identified.

**4. Qualifications of the applicants and others involved in implementing the proposed project.** Applicants and subs are qualified.

**5. Local involvement (including environmental compliance).** Supported by local landowners (will provide access). No local financial support. Applicant states no environmental clearance or permits required. Includes public outreach plan.

**6. Cost.** Seems high in light of uncertainty of landowners desire to participate. General cost description was weak. Panel suggests breaking down cost by year.

**7. Cost sharing.** None

**8. Additional comments.** Panel supportive of organic rice production versus traditional culture methods.

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### Regional Ranking

**Panel Ranking:** Medium low

**Provide a brief explanation of your ranking:** The proposal has commendable goals – rice production replaces corn to reduce or even reverse organic soil subsidence in the Delta, thus stabilizing the Delta island/levee system. However, as stated by the TARP, the scale of the proposal brings into question its feasibility as a demonstration/pilot project.

The Panel recommends partial funding for conducting in depth monitoring and assessment of the physical (including subsidence), environmental and biological changes as a result of the conversion.