

ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS

Representing City and County Governments of the San Francisco Bay Area



ABAG

May 9, 2002

VIA FACSIMILE & US MAIL

Dan Ray
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Ray:

The ABAG-CALFED Task Force and the San Francisco Estuary Project are pleased to respond to your request for public input on reviewing the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program's Selection Panel recommendations. On May 1, 2002, we convened a joint workshop to give an opportunity for the diverse interests of the Bay Area to review the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program's Selection Panel recommendations. The goal of this workshop was to identify how those recommendations fit with the priorities identified in the San Francisco Estuary Project's Bay-Delta Environmental Report Card 1999-2001 and to identify any issues for CALFED relative to the recommendations. This letter summarizes the input received at our workshop on specific issues as well as larger CALFED implementation issues.

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) represents the nine counties and the many cities of the Bay Area. ABAG is interested in providing input as elements of the CALFED plan are implemented that affect the Bay Area. As such, ABAG established the ABAG CALFED Task Force, a consensus based forum that includes representatives of water districts, local government, and many of the stakeholder groups that have an interest in CALFED implementation.

The San Francisco Estuary Project is a cooperative federal-state partnership organized through the US Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program. The project brought together 100 private, government, and community interests to develop a consensus plan, the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), which was signed by the Governor and the US EPA Administrator in 1993. In August 2001, the S.F. Estuary Project brought together its stakeholders to revisit the top priorities for CCMP implementation and to review progress. The results of this are detailed in the Bay-Delta Environmental Report Card 1999-2001.

In recognition of the common interest between the SF Estuary Project and the ABAG CALFED Task Force in promoting environmental restoration, the Task Force Ecosystem Subcommittee and the S.F. Estuary Project Implementation Committee have been working cooperatively to address issues related to implementation of the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program in the Bay Area.



Roughly 15 people attended the May 1st Workshop. Two participants also submitted written comments. One member of the task force offered comments at the April 29, 2002 ABAG-CALFED task force meeting. General comments on CALFED implementation are as follows:

1. As the state and federal budgets become tighter, there is a need for much greater clarification about funding sources. In particular, support needs to be identified for programs at risk because of the amount of general fund dollars they receive or because of their lack of a federal authorization. There is a high level of concern about the potential lack of funds for previously approved projects. Failure to address this important issue creates the potential for the program to become "unbalanced" in its implementation.
2. The Science Program is critically important. One component of the Science Program that the workshop participants wanted to call particular attention to is the identification of indicators and performance measures. This is critically important to understanding how the projects, past and future, are performing, what progress is being made towards the goals, and where gaps exist. This issue is important in its own right but is also a key to obtaining future funding.
3. Using a list provided by CALFED of projects that listed any of the nine Bay Area counties, staff identified how those projects fit with the CCMP priorities. The results of that analysis are attached to this letter. Generally, the projects are consistent with the priorities of the CCMP.

Comments relative to specific recommendations of the Selection Panel are as follows:

Reference Number 90: Bahia Acquisition and Tidal Wetland Restoration: Local support for this project is extremely high. We appreciate the recommendation to fund this project 'as is' and urge the Selection Panel to not change this recommendation. The Bahia acquisition is consistent with multiple CCMP priorities and is consistent and complimentary to other local efforts. The City of Novato and Marin County support the project. The voters of Novato have previously voted 70% against proposals to develop the site and the City sees this as an excellent opportunity that may be lost if there is any delay. When combined with CALFED's previously funded commitment to the Hamilton project, it will provide significant public access. The project falls within the San Pablo Bay watershed and is consistent with the regional planning for that area.

Reference Numbers 17, 31, 90, 138, and 161: Support was expressed for these projects. Some are important components of regional efforts. Others, such as #161, are important because they help update local plans that are very out of date.

Reference Numbers 129, 130, 131, and 69: These projects to address methyl mercury should be funded. However, the Selection Panel should recommend inclusion of an outreach and education component so that the results of the research can be shared with the communities most at risk to exposure to methyl mercury through consumption of fish and wildlife. Research conducted by the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition has shown a very low level of awareness of this issue in the communities potentially impacted.

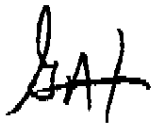
Reference Number 30: The Selection Panel correctly identified the need to address concerns of the City of Oakley with the Dutch Slough Project. However, the project should also address the water quality, operational, safety and security concerns of Contra Costa Water District so that it does not adversely impact the Contra Costa Canal that is immediately adjacent to the site. The project must also be designed and implemented so that it does not adversely impact water quality at Delta diversion sites that supply urban water districts.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this important decision. Environmental restoration of the Bay and Delta enjoys broad support in the Bay Area and we appreciate the commitment the CALFED program has shown to restoration projects in the nine Bay Area counties.

Sincerely,



Mike Rippey
Board of Supervisors, County of Napa
Chair, ABAG-CALFED Task Force



Greg Zlotnick
Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Water District
Vice-Chair, ABAG-CALFED Task Force



Lawrence P. Kolb
Chair Implementation Committee
San Francisco Estuary Project

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Initial Panel Recommendations Compared to Bay-Delta Environmental Report Card September 2001 Revised Priorities

ERP Project Reference Number	CCMP Priorities							
	Expand, restore and protect Bay and Delta wetlands	Reduce the impact of invasive species on the Estuary through prevention, control, eradication, and education	Protect and restore watersheds throughout the Estuary	Create incentives that encourage governments, landowners, and communities to protect and restore the Estuary	Minimize or eliminate pollution of the Estuary from all sources	Increase public awareness of the Estuary's natural resources and the impacts of human activity on them	Expand the regional monitoring program to address all key CCMP issues	Promulgate baseline inflow standards for San Francisco, San Pablo, and Suisun Bays to protect and restore the Estuary ecosystem
1			x					
17	x				x			
18								
22		x						
29	x							
30	x							
31	x							
63								x
69								
71					x			
80	x							
90	x							
112								
113								
129								x
130								x
131								x
138								
150	x							
151								x

