

Delta Improvements Package – A 2004 CalFed Priority

CalFed...Balanced Progress Through Collaboration

In 2000, a unique collaboration of interests – federal and state agencies, environmental organizations, water agencies, business groups, labor, agricultural interests and local communities – came together and put their historic differences aside to develop and agree upon a comprehensive, long-term plan for managing California's Bay-Delta, the largest estuary in North America and one of California's primary water sources. A bold, new structure needed to be created and implemented to resolve and manage the decades of conflict straining the fragile Bay-Delta system. The CalFed Bay-Delta Program emerged with clear mandates...improve water supply reliability and water quality in California, and improve the ecological health of the Bay-Delta and its levee system.

CalFed's Record of Decision, published in August 2000, laid out a blueprint for success. The first seven years of implementation, known as "Stage 1", include specific milestones for progress in ecosystem restoration, water quality, water supply and levee integrity. The Ecosystem Restoration Program has seen significant progress with the investment of \$669 million in ecosystem projects and increasing Delta fishery populations. However, according to CalFed, the water supply, water quality, and levee programs in Stage 1 have been delayed for a variety of reasons.

The core principle of the Record of Decision, the principle that binds unilateral stakeholder support, is that all CalFed components are inter-related *and* interdependent. Politically and programmatically, each program's success is directly linked to the success of the other programs. Sound, science-based programs and projects to advance ecosystem restoration, water supply, water quality and levee integrity would all advance equally during Stage 1 and would likewise benefit from their counterparts' progress. Continued success during Stage 1 requires increased efforts on those programs that have been delayed.

Delta Improvements Package – A 2004 Priority for Calfed

2004 will be a critical year as a much-needed, three-part package of Delta improvements will advance to meet the milestones established by CalFed for Stage 1. The Delta Improvements Package includes:



Water Supply Reliability

– Conveyance Program



Ecosystem Restoration

– Long-Term Environmental Water Account



Water Quality

– Delta Protections



Levee System Integrity

– Upgrade of existing levees

Collectively, the Delta Improvements Package will provide water supply reliability, ecosystem restoration, water quality benefits and levee improvements for local Delta users and the broader statewide community, and is the first major implementation package of statewide significance within the CalFed program. It involves moving a series of statewide water and environmental projects from planning to actual implementation.

To date, CalFed has invested more than \$2 billion to meet its program goals, scattered over hundreds of local and regional projects. In 2004, projects with statewide benefit and significance will move towards implementation.

Improving Water Supply Reliability – Conveyance Program

The Bay-Delta receives water from the state's largest watershed and provides water for much of California. Maintaining a reliable, sufficient supply of water from the Bay-Delta is essential to the state's trillion-dollar economy and to the quality of life for the state's population.

One of the key programs within CalFed is improved conveyance of water through the Delta. CalFed's South Delta Improvements Program, a component within the overall Conveyance Program, will move water through the Delta in a way that increases water supply, improves water quality, improves ecosystem health and protects local Delta interests.

The Conveyance program is comprised of several key initiatives, which will continue their respective environmental review processes in Fall/Winter 2004, with completion of those processes expected in the Spring of 2005. Completion of the environmental reviews marks a significant step forward for CalFed.

- ✓ Increasing State Water Project ("SWP") pumping from the current level of 6,700 cfs to 8500 cfs
- ✓ Constructing the SWP Aqueduct and Central Valley Project ("CVP") Delta Mendota Canal Intertie
- ✓ Implementing a SWP/CVP Integration Plan

The California Department of Water Resources has reported that the water supply and environmental benefits to be generated by the overall Conveyance Program will be approximately 250,000 acre-feet per year. Of that amount, the department estimates approximately 60,000 acre-feet per year can be attributed directly to the SWP/CVP Integration Plan.

Conflicts Between Federal and State Projects Now Resolved

Advancing CalFed's Conveyance Program and other water supply and water quality improvements requires interagency cooperation and coordinated operations of the SWP and CVP. However, the projects vastly differing operating plans and regulatory paths prevented any mean-

ingful progress in implementing CalFed water supply improvements or improving Delta water quality. As a result, CalFed's much needed Conveyance program had been stalled.

In July 2003, to get the process moving again, representatives from the California Department of Water Resources and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, at the direction of the Bush and Davis Administrations, met with representatives of their contracting agencies to resolve conflicts and determine ways to better operate and integrate their projects, seeking to increase efficiencies, storage opportunities and water supply. The proposed SWP/CVP Integration Plan, currently undergoing environmental review, is consistent with and enables balanced implementation of the CalFed ROD by making the other elements within the Conveyance program feasible.

Protections For The Environment – Long-Term Environmental Water Account

An essential goal of the CalFed ROD is to resolve the inherent conflict in improving water supply reliability and providing environmental protections for fish and other wildlife living in the Bay-Delta ecosystem. Therefore, any progress on water supply reliability is supported by progress in CalFed's environmental programs.

CalFed established a new national model for conflict resolution with the creation of the innovative Environmental Water Account, which purchased and then provided water to urban and agricultural users when pumps had to be shut down to protect fish. The pilot, four-year Envi-

ronmental Water Account, has been a success by all accounts but is currently scheduled to expire in 2004.

California's water users are committed to establishing a long-term Environmental Water Account. Advancing CalFed's Conveyance program includes development and implementation of a Long-Term Environmental Water Account, by the federal and state agencies. The Long-Term Environmental Water Account will be available for public comment in Winter of 2004 and Spring of 2005.

Improving Water Quality – Delta Protections

All stakeholders agree that local cities and farms in the Delta must be protected from impacts to water quality and water levels as more water is moved through the Delta. Accordingly, a series of improvements and protective measures that are part of the CalFed ROD, including water quality and water level standards, tidal barriers and management of agricultural drainage, will be presented by the state and federal governments. These measures will become part of the overall Delta Improvements package that moves forward in 2004.

Delta Improvements Package Needs To Advance

As mentioned, to date, the most significant progress within CalFed has been ecosystem restoration and other environmentally-focused programs. Likewise, some regional water supply projects such as water recycling and groundwater management have also progressed. Other programs, such as conveyance, water quality and surface storage, have fallen behind schedule.

The Delta Improvements Package is an important step forward for CalFed in advancing a series of projects with statewide benefit from just planning to actual implementation. This package is scheduled to advance in Fall 2004 and promises to meet the commitment to balance called for in Stage 1, making it one of California's most critical water decisions of the year. In August 2004, the California Bay-Delta Authority took an important step forward and adopted the Delta Improvements Package "Implementation Plan." The Implementation Plan lays out a detailed framework and schedule for implementing the various components of the package in the months ahead. Specific information on the Implementation Plan can be obtained on CalFed's Web site at www.calwater.ca.gov

"California's Water Future" Launched To Support The Delta Improvements Package

"California's Water Future" is a statewide coalition of water, agricultural, business and labor interests, stretching from Northern California to Southern California, committed to balanced and timely implementation of the CalFed ROD. The coalition not only seeks balanced progress in all programmatic areas of CalFed, but also actively lobbies for increased funding from the state and federal government. The coalition views CalFed's Delta Improvements Package as integral and critical for all California interests and has been organized to educate and advocate for the Delta

Improvements Package, including participating in the environmental review processes for the various package components that will launch in Fall/Winter 2004.

A partial list of coalition members includes the Association of California Water Agencies, the California Business Properties Association, California Chamber of Commerce, Kern County Water Agency, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority, Santa Clara Valley Water District, State Water Contractors, the Southern California Water Committee, and Westlands Water District. For more information on CalFed Bay-Delta Program 2004 priorities and California's Water Future, please contact:

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