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WILSON, BABBITT DISCUSS DEVELOPMENT OF CALFED ALTERNATIVE

SACRAMENTO – California Governor Pete Wilson and U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt continued their series of meetings today to discuss key issues regarding the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. They stated that the CALFED staff is developing a "revised framework" document describing the development and key elements of a draft preferred alternative with an emphasis on the first seven-year stage of the Program.

Wilson and Babbitt requested that CALFED staff release this "revised framework" document for broad public review by the end of the month. While commending the CALFED staff for their efforts on the document to date, they noted that it is a working document. While endorsing the general direction of the document, the Governor and the Secretary urged all stakeholders to review and comment on the detailed actions being considered.

In addition, CALFED staff is preparing a draft paper describing a coordinated strategy of actions and assurances for 1999 that can be implemented under existing authorities to provide benefits for all interests. This paper also will be released later this month by CALFED staff for stakeholder review and input.

Both Wilson and Babbitt reiterated their commitment to the CALFED process and called upon stakeholders to fully engage and seek a consensus on long-term solutions for the California Bay-Delta.

"I am pleased that our CALFED negotiations are continuing and we are working towards a preferred alternative," Wilson said. "We need to ensure stable, reliable and long-term water supply for all Californians – fish, farm and factory."

"The meetings with Gov. Wilson continue to be productive and reflect progress," Babbitt said. "I strongly urge all stakeholders to continue their work with the CALFED staff particularly regarding input on the revised framework document to be released in the coming weeks."

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program, initiated in 1995 by Governor Pete Wilson and the Clinton Administration, is an unprecedented collaboration among state and federal agencies and the state's leading urban, agricultural and environmental interests to address and resolve the environmental and water management problems associated with the Bay-Delta system. CALFED consists of the decision-makers of these agencies as well as technical staff. The mission of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program is to develop a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system.