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Stockton Workshop Looks at Environmental Justice of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program

STOCKTON -- Representatives of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program will join residents of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta region at a Sept. 25 workshop examining whether the CALFED agencies' ambitious ecosystem and water-management plans will help or hurt the region's minority and disadvantaged communities.

The public workshop, organized by CALFED agencies in conjunction with the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water, is scheduled from 6:30 to 9 p.m. in the South Hall of the Stockton Memorial Civic Auditorium, 525 N. Center St., Stockton.

Residents and community groups will hear from state and federal officials about how their agencies' ecosystem, water-supply and water-quality programs will benefit the Delta region. Residents will also have a chance to comment on whether those programs could have an adverse impact on their lives.

Martha Guzman, legislative analyst for the United Farm Workers and a member of the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water, encourages Delta-area farmworkers, community leaders, water-district representatives and others with a stake in water issues to attend. Spanish-language translators will be at the workshop for participants who don't speak English.

In the CALFED Record of Decision, a 30-year strategic plan adopted last year, state and federal agencies committed to identifying activities that may have a disproportionate impact on minority, low-income, Tribal or other populations, and to take actions to reduce those impacts.

At two earlier workshops on environmental justice, residents of the Bay Area and the southern San Joaquin Valley expressed concern about the quality and availability of water supplies, the possible conversion of farmland into habitat, and how CALFED agencies make their funding decisions.

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The Resources Agency
Department of Water Resources
Department of Fish and Game
The Reclamation Board
Delta Protection Commission
Department of Conservation
San Francisco Bay Conservation
and Development Commission

California Environmental Protection Agency
State Water Resources Control Board
Department of Health Services
Department of Food and Agriculture

Federal

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Fish and Wildlife Service
Geological Survey
Bureau of Land Management
Environmental Protection
Agency

Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Forest Service
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service
Western Area Power Administration

“Participants at the workshops were very effective at identifying issues,” says Dan Wermiel, the CALFED environmental justice coordinator.

CALFED program staff is conducting environmental-justice workshops around the state. The two earlier workshops – in North Richmond on Aug. 15, and Delano on Aug. 29 -- each attracted about 70 participants. Other sessions will be scheduled in Southern California and the Sacramento Valley.

CALFED agencies will use testimony from the workshops to develop an environmental-justice element for their ecosystem and water-management projects.

For more information about the workshops or the CALFED environmental-justice initiative, contact Dan Wermiel at (916) 657-3649. For information on the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water, contact Martha Guzman at (916) 341-0612.

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is not a government agency. It is a cooperative effort of more than 20 state and federal agencies to improve the quality and reliability of California’s water supplies while restoring the San Francisco Bay-Delta estuary to ecological health. The CALFED Record of Decision, a 30-year strategic plan adopted in August 2000, outlines more than \$8 billion in expenditures in the first seven years for water-supply, water-quality, levee and environmental improvements.

NOTE FOR NEWS MEDIA: Call Jim Nickles at (916) 651-9706 for the workshop agenda or directions to the Stockton Memorial Civic Auditorium.

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