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Lasgoity Ranches

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CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, #1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

August 27, 1999

Dear Sir:

The following are my comments for the administrative record during the public comment period for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.

My name is Michele Lasgoity. My family and I have a diversified production agriculture business which began in the 1920's primarily operating in Madera County. Our products consist of beef cattle, wine grapes, sheep, wool, cotton and alfalfa. I manage the cattle operation of our business and perform the financial and administrative activities for all of our operations.

Water development in the State of California has not kept pace with the population and land use growth over the past 15 years. In addition, new federal guidelines adopted in 1992 drastically increased the price of farmers' surface water and took away 800,000 acre feet historically used by farmers. The consequence of these actions, and lack of action, both at a federal and state level has agriculture, environmental and urban interests in a battle for a scarce resource. The battle is fierce, time-consuming and expensive. If not for the previous several years of above average rainfall, the battle would be a war with agriculture the very likely victim.

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program initiated several years ago by Federal, State and other water interests was to provide a process to plan for California's water future while addressing bay-delta environmental problems. Instead of looking to California's future and the 21st century, the recently published CALFED document seems to look backwards with its proposal of taking water away from people through idling productive land coupled with no specific commitment to developing new water storage. The issue is that California's population and demands upon water supply are growing at a 21st century rate. Once again, the myriad of environmental interests in the CALFED Program has held hostage any move towards creating any additional storage to meet California's current and future water needs.

California needs more water storage capability. We must invest in this area in order to satisfy all the demands upon our water resource and maintain our state's economic viability, especially in agriculture. People throughout California benefit from the state's highly productive farmland, whether they work on the land, live in rural communities or shop at a grocery store in the city. Agriculture is the number one contributor to California's GDP and consists of hard working people trying to maintain a way of life for themselves, their employees and their families. Actions that hurt our rural areas also hurt urban areas because thousands of urban jobs involve moving, processing and marketing farm products. People's way of life and agriculture's economic vitality are threatened due to the uncertainty of future water storage and supply.