1280 SEP 23 1999

City of Visalia

707 West Acequia, Visalia, CA 93291

Office of the City Council

Tel: (559) 738-3313 Fax: (559) 730-7043

September 20, 1999

CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Rick Breitenbach
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 115
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR Preferred Alternative for CALFED Bay-Delta Program

The City of Visalia is opposed to the preferred alternative identified in the draft programmatic EIS/EIR for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. We are very supportive of the CALFED Program coming to consensus with the many diverse stakeholders; however, the Program as proposed does not accomplish that goal and as such we cannot offer our support.

The original purpose of the CALFED Bay-Delta program was to balance the State's water supply between people and the environment. The preferred alternative identified in the Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR, however, has the potential to tremendously impact the San Joaquin valley as upwards of 800,000 ac-ft of water per year is redirected to environmental purposes in the Delta. This is not a balance of the use of water between people and the environment.

Tulare County is the second largest agricultural producing county in the State. Tulare County is also experiencing double digit unemployment rates approaching 20 percent. The redirection of water from the area will cause land to be taken out of production thereby reducing the number of job opportunities in the area. Since the economies of many of the towns and cities in the San Joaquin Valley are dependent upon the farming industry, they will suffer as well. The pumping of ground water is not a viable alternative as an overdraft situation already exists.

It's been stated that the population of California will grow by 20 million people. If new water supplies are not developed to meet the domestic needs of this new population where will the water come from? And, if new supplies are not developed for agricultural purposes how will these new people be fed?

The Bay-Delta program must go back to its original purpose and develop a program that is balanced and meets the needs of all Californians. This includes identifying and developing new storage opportunities to meet the needs of the anticipated population growth and maintain the environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft programmatic EIS/EIR for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. We are looking forward to reviewing a revised draft of the EIS/EIR wherein a more balanced approach is taken dealing with these issues.

Wally Gregory
Mayor

RECYCLED PAPER