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318 Montford Ave
Mill Valley, CA 94941
August 26, 1999

Mr. Lester Snow, Executive Director,
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth St., Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

AUG 31 1999

Dear Mr. Snow,

I am greatly disappointed by the CALFED plan to build a dozen new dams. I recognize that there is a trend today to control all rivers and other natural features of the environment -- that there are individuals who always appear to feel the need and exert political pressure for a dam or a levee in their area which they seem to feel will solve all their current problems.

Perhaps as people gather in heavily populated areas, they begin to fear natural environmental features. In the East the rivers and bays are so polluted that fish mainly have died, and the East Coast is becoming more and more a paved corridor.

In the Midwest the fields of grain have been extended to the edge of the roads, and from fence to fence, without leaving the brush that traditionally edged the fields and provided shelter for rabbits and gamebirds only a few decades ago. Consequently, the farming area is becoming void of small animals. Obviously, the increase in farmed acreage from eliminating borders has not solved the farmers' problems as prices fall. At the same time, new shopping malls pave the edges of small towns, leaving the centers full of empty, boarded-up buildings and of empty multi-storied garages (no sooner built to handle increased traffic than they became obsolete).

In parts of the West we've permitted grazing to the edges of our heavily damned rivers, and in parts of the Northwest permitted lumbering (even in national forests) to the banks of rivers with devastating consequences to our fish.

In California, we have already constructed more than 1,000 dams, again with grave damage to the fish and beauty of California. Each of these dams was thought to be the final solution to some vital problem; yet many of them failed to solve that particular problem and were later deemed to have been ill-placed or unnecessary. However, there is no way to undo the harm, to replan, once the dam has been constructed.

More effective planning by your agency (if you have the integrity and courage to withstand political pressure) is needed with a view to the long-term interests of Californians. By destroying California's rivers and streams for the presumed advantage of small groups who continue to press for a dam to solve a currently-perceived problem, we are depriving future generations of Californians of the pleasure of quality water and of experiencing the beauty of natural rivers filled with fish.

The solution of California's water problems does not lie in constantly constructing more and more dams to satisfy agribusiness demands. These groups must be encouraged to find alternate ways of solving their water needs. If your agency could provide leadership in that direction, you would be contributing to an improved future for California rather than (with dams) a degraded one.

Sincerely yours,

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