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BELRIDGE WATER STORAGE DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 15, 1999

TO: CALFED Bay-Delta Program

FROM: J. Paul Hendrix – General Manager

SUBJECT: Comments on Programmatic EIS/EIR

I attended most of the public hearing held regarding the June 1999 Programmatic EIS/EIR held on September 14th in Visalia. Due to the large number of speakers at the hearing, I did not have the opportunity to verbally present my comments. I did, however, intend to submit my comments in writing and they are enclosed. I wish these comments to be entered into the record as part of the hearing process.

Enclosure

POST OFFICE BOX 1087 BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA 93302-1087 TELEPHONE (661) 762-7316
FAX (661) 762-7223

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Belridge Water Storage District

Statement to CALFED at Public Hearing
Visalia, CA – September 14, 1999

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments tonight on your Programmatic EIS/EIR. My name is Paul Hendrix and I'm the General Manager of Belridge Water Storage District. The District is located in western Kern County and provides water for primarily agricultural use to some 52,000 acres. The District's primary source of water is 148,000 acre-feet of entitlement from the State Water Project.

In the aftermath of the Bay/Delta Accord and the reduction in water supplies stemming from it, we have understood that CALFED would, among other things, provide a solution to increase water supplies for Delta exporters. As I review the record of public comments at previous hearings, I am gravely concerned that CALFED has paid little attention to this emphatically-stated water supply need. What we have instead are vague phrases expressing goals such as "reducing the mismatch between Delta water supplies and beneficial uses," "improving water management," and "improving water supply reliability."

If it were the case that the need for water supply increases was expressed by only a small number of stakeholders, it might be understandable that it is not deserving of much attention. To the contrary, however, the entire water community, the agricultural sector, the urban business sector, and labor representatives have all very clearly voiced the need for CALFED to identify alternatives to increase water supplies.

A review of the three alternatives described in the EIS/EIR, as well as the preferred alternative, indicates virtually nothing to provide for increases in Delta exports in the future. As the document approaches finality, we expect to be shown how the selected alternative is going to achieve this.