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SIERRA NEVADA GROUP

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September 22, 1999

Rick Breitenbach
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Breitenbach:

My name is Barbara Rivenes and I live in Nevada City in the South Yuba watershed. I am the Chairperson for the Sierra Nevada Group of the Sierra Club and while I represent members of the Group, I am an individual citizen and especially a grandmother who desires to see a "sustainable future" for her grandchildren and succeeding generations. Those are the ones who will really feel impact of the decisions being made by this body. I believe it is way past time to acknowledge that we live in a mediterranean climate and must use water wisely and efficiently and not destroy what's left of our natural environment.

What I mean by efficiency is not more storage facilities, more dams, more dam enlargements, but WATER CONSERVATION - by metering urban centers not already metered, by using volume-based water rates, by employing existing technologies that could cut farmers, industry and city water usages by large percentages without sacrificing economics and quality of life, by retiring marginal, and toxic farm lands, by re-evaluating the productivity of crops in relation to the amount of developed water usage. The numbers of acre-feet of water CONSERVED with just these few prescriptions is in the millions. However, it is important to remember that retiring marginal farm lands and using the acquired developed water rights for future sprawl development, such as the controversial Tracy Hills project, is not a direction I would advocate for a variety of reasons.

I am aware that CALFED proposes and supports VOLUNTARY water conservation and water use efficiency measures, but it is simply does not go far enough. We are meeting in a large metropolitan area that proudly does not meter its water. It's ridiculous to continue this practice when we are considering building storage facilities and new dams costing billions. Central Valley cities would easily conserve if faced with the true costs of their water. Developing

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more water through greater storage and dam construction is at the expense of all the citizens of California and its fast disappearing critters. Fresno has been recently polled and would favor by a small margin either mandatory or voluntary metering. It is presently illegal to read meters at single family residences in that city.

Southern California has proven that conservation, efficient use and reclamation of water works. While Los Angeles has grown in population by 3 million, water usage is the same as in 1984. As a former rider in the L.A. to Mono Lake bike ride, returning a symbolic vial of water from LADWP's reflecting pond 365 miles uphill to Mono Lake, I commend and congratulate that water agency on its efforts and direction. And I would urge that CALFED follow those conservation prescriptions more forcefully.

The mission of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program is to develop a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system. Yet some of the proposed dams and storage facilities remove flows from healthy waterways and inundate others - how can this restore ecological health? We would like to see less plumbing and more NEW water - NEW water meaning "conserved" water.

Thank you for opportunity to comment on these proposals.

Sincerely,

Barbara Rivenes
Sierra Nevada Group