

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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SEP 20 2007

Mr. Phil Isenberg, Chairman
Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force
650 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Isenberg:

This letter is in response to the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force's request of the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for information on the feasibility and potential challenges of implementing the various features of the two Stakeholder Committee Group (SGC) visions – Flexible Delta and Resilient Adaptive Delta.

We are continuing to assess these and other alternative visions and expect to provide the Task Force with a more formal assessment within the next two weeks. DWR is actively engaged in two on-going processes that are directly related to the Delta Vision: The Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) and the Delta Risk Management Strategy (DRMS). They are more targeted in their analysis and will yield the type of detailed information requested by the Task Force over the next several weeks; The Task Force already has most of the DRMS results available to date. We expect to provide an updated version of the DRMS Phase II results related to risk reduction strategies at the October Task Force meeting. In addition, the consultant to the BDCP process has completed the first round of evaluations of the four options being considered in that process. The Delta conveyance aspects of the two Delta Vision Stakeholder Coordination Group alternatives are contained within these four options being evaluated by BDCP. The executive summary of the BDCP Options Evaluation Report, dated September 17, has already been provided to you by your staff and the complete 300 plus page evaluation of these options from both an environmental and water management perspective is available, at www.resources.ca.gov/bdcp.

It is expected that the BDCP process will result in a hybrid of these four options addressing the environmental and water supply reliability issues related to water conveyance across the Delta. That will then set the stage for a detailed evaluation of long term ecosystem restoration projects and possible interim actions related to both water supply reliability and specific fish species protection.

Mr. Phil Isenberg

SEP 20 2007
Page 2

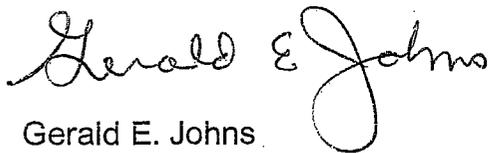
The SCG alternative visions tend to approach the Delta with incremental actions and additional planning rather than presenting a definitive long term vision. While there will always be uncertainty about any course of action to improve conditions, there is no uncertainty that the current situation in the Delta is not working for either fishery or water supply reliability concerns. The history of the Delta is that of incomplete interim action. Our greatest need is to develop a long term solution and the interim action which will lead to that vision.

The SGC visions have similar proposed ecosystem restoration actions. Many of these are consistent with those identified in the Pelagic Fish Action Plan prepared by DWR and the Department of Fish and Game for the Resources Agency in March of this year. They are good first steps in identifying areas to assist in making the Delta and Suisun Bay areas more biologically productive in recognition of the dramatic drop in productivity for pelagic fish in these areas likely caused by invasive species. However, benefits of the proposed actions are somewhat limited in scope due to the continued reliance on through delta water conveyance. In addition, these measures and the reliance on through delta water conveyance could affect drinking water quality and water treatment costs that will need to be further evaluated.

As mentioned above, DWR will provide more detailed comments on the SCG alternative visions in the next 2 weeks. In the interim, the BDCP Options Evaluation Report provides the Task Force with insights into the feasibility of the Middle River conveyance option and evaluates how the various options compare in terms of improved protection to at risk Delta fish species and water supply capabilities and reliability.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at (916) 653-8045.

Sincerely,



Gerald E. Johns
Deputy Director

Mr. Phil Isenberg

SEP 20 2007

Page 3

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