

Agenda Item: 7-6
Meeting Dates: April 8, 2004

DELTA IMPROVEMENTS PACKAGE UPDATE

Summary: A status report on the Delta Improvements Package was presented to the Authority at its February 11, 2004 meeting. The Authority staff and State and Federal agencies provided an update to BDPAC at the March 11, 2004 meeting. Staff will provide an update on the progress and next steps at the April 2004 Authority meeting.

Recommended Action: This is an informational item only. No action will be taken.

Background

The CALFED Record of Decision (ROD) calls for a balanced approach to achieving key goals of water supply reliability, ecosystem restoration, water quality improvement, and levee system integrity.

The implementing agencies will take actions related to key ROD commitments over the next few months. These actions include: 1) increasing the capability of the State Water Project (SWP) to export up to 8,500 cfs; 2) increased integration of the State and Federal water projects through shared storage and conveyance agreements (SWP/CVP Integration Plan); 3) development of a new, long-term Environmental Water Account (EWA) to ensure that fish populations are protected without jeopardizing water supplies; 4) water quality and reliability improvements for cities and farms that directly from the Delta; and 5) increased scientific studies of the Delta system to support more flexible, real-time management by the agencies.

During 2002, the agencies recognized that many of their proposed actions were interrelated and that decisions on key components could not be made in isolation. For example, the South Delta Improvement Program (SDIP) proposes to increase the export limit of the State Water Project. Operating to a higher limit could reduce the ability of the EWA to manage for the recovery of endangered fish, if the EWA assets were not improved. Improving the EWA, however, would require agreement that the EWA would continue beyond its four-year experimental period.

The agencies also recognized that while each had its own priorities based on jurisdiction and mandates, it was important to coordinate decision-making and move

forward with a package of actions that was consistent with the CALFED Program's principle of balance. The agencies have been working since 2002 to implement this balanced and integrative approach to decision-making.

Ultimately, the successful implementation of each of the proposed actions requires balanced progress and meaningful assurances that the key interests of all Program stakeholders will be addressed. As one example, this means that in-Delta water quality concerns must be addressed concurrent with proposed water supply improvements such as SDIP. Moreover, agencies and all stakeholders have emphasized the importance of integrating the work of the Science Program into agency decision-making.

An initial list of potential projects being considered as part of the Delta Improvements Package was provided to the Authority at the February 11, 2004 meeting.

The elements under consideration will undergo an extensive public review process, through a variety of means, including CEQA and NEPA reviews when required, workshops, review by BDPAC and its subcommittees, meetings with stakeholders, and presentations to the Authority. In addition, all projects under consideration will have to complete applicable regulatory permitting requirements.

A draft matrix has been prepared as a working document to develop additional detail on the actions, commitments and schedules for the various components of the Delta Improvements Package and is planned to be distributed at the April 7 and 8, 2004 Authority meeting.

List of Attachments

None.

Contact

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