

FILED  
by the Board of Directors of  
The Metropolitan Water District  
of Southern California  
at its meeting held

NOV - 8 1994

9-18



**MWD**

METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

*Barry E. Duff*  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

October 21, 1994

To: Board of Directors (Executive Committee--Information)  
(Water Problems Committee--Information)  
From: General Manager  
Subject: Joint Urban/Agricultural Proposal on Bay-Delta Water Quality Standards

Report

During the past several months, consensus has developed among major urban and agricultural agencies on a detailed proposal for Bay-Delta water quality standards. Metropolitan has been participating as part of this consensus effort. The participating agencies have agreed that the current narrow focus on species-by-species regulations has proven ineffective at resolving the competing demands for water from the Bay-Delta watershed. Instead, the joint urban/agricultural approach focuses on overall habitat quality for aquatic organisms. The agencies involved in this consensus effort include the members of California Urban Water Agencies (CUWA), San Luis and Delta Mendota Water Authority, Westlands Water District, and members of the State Water Contractors, including Kern County Water Agency and Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District.

On October 19, 1994, the participating agencies made a joint urban/agricultural presentation to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) at its triennial review workshop regarding Bay-Delta standards. As part of the presentation, the agencies provided a description of the proposal in the form of a briefing book. A copy of this briefing book is attached for your review.

The Joint Urban/Agricultural Proposal includes the following four main categories:

**Category I -- Estuarine Habitat Standard:** This standard would focus on protection of shallow-water habitat for estuarine species in the Suisun Bay complex through increased freshwater outflow or salinity requirements. Compliance would be based on a "sliding scale" to ensure that the standard reflects the natural hydrologic variability of the Bay-Delta watershed. Water agency staff worked closely

with the federal Environmental Protection Agency staff to develop the sliding scale criteria.

**Category II -- Operational and Flow Measures:**

These measures would control operation of water project facilities such as the Delta Cross-Channel, fish barriers at Old River, and State and Federal Delta diversions. Flow-related measures include flow requirements in the Sacramento River, San Joaquin River, and Delta, and limits on exports and diversions from the Delta.

**Category III -- Control of Non-Flow-Related**

**Factors:** Recommended measures would control the effects on aquatic species of "other factors" not related to flows, such as unscreened water diversions, waste-water discharge, legal and illegal fishing, exotic species, riparian and wetland degradation, and Delta levee and channel alteration.

**Category IV -- Implementation Measures:**

Measures involving implementation of new Bay-Delta standards will come into effect during the water rights phase of the State Board's process. The measures in the Joint Proposal include balancing responsibility among Bay-Delta watershed users, mitigation credits, and an environmental restoration fund. Some disagreement remains between urban and agricultural agencies regarding Category IV measures.

The urban and agricultural agencies are preparing detailed documentation of the biological justification for the measures contained in Categories I through III. Also, in an effort to strengthen the Joint Proposal, technical representatives of urban and agricultural water agencies have met with State and Federal agency staff to describe the proposal in detail and discuss concerns they may have with any of its elements. Representatives of urban and agricultural agencies also have been meeting and will continue to meet with environmental organizations to discuss concerns they may have with the Joint Proposal.

Under the terms of the State/Federal Framework Agreement for the Bay-Delta, the State Board will issue draft standards by December 15, 1994. On the same date, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will finalize Federal standards issued in draft form in January, 1994. If EPA approves state-submitted standards, EPA has agreed to withdraw the Federal standards. In June 1995, the State Board is scheduled begin water rights proceedings to implement new standards.

Staff will continue to keep your Board fully informed of developments regarding State and Federal water quality proceedings.

Recommendation

For information only.

John R. Wodraska  
General Manager

Submitted by:




---

Debra C. Man  
Chief of Planning  
and Resources

Concur:

By



---

John R. Wodraska  
General Manager

for

WWH:cl

Attachment