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February 3, 2009

Honorable Mike Chrisman
Secretary, Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Mr. Joe Grindstaff
Executive Director, CALFED
650 Capitol Mall, 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Bay Delta Conservation Plan
Delta Regional Ecosystem Restoration Implementation Plan
January 14, 2009 Workshop**

On behalf of the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD) and our ratepayers, I feel compelled to bring to your attention the regrettable actions of some members of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) Steering Committee, which further indicates the “closed nature” of the BDCP process, and the disregard for interested stakeholders who have a real and significant stake in the outcome of deliberations and decisions made by your agencies.

As you know, SRCSD is vitally interested in the work of the BDCP, and has participated (to the limited extent permitted by BDCP staff) in past workshops and meetings of various technical working groups. In early January, we were notified and invited to participate in the Delta Regional Ecosystem Restoration Implementation Plan (DRERIP) evaluation workshop to be held on January 14, 2009. On January 8, we were summarily disinvented by your consultant with The Essex Group. We expressed our frustration at being excluded from the evaluation team, but confirmed that SRCSD would have a representative present at the workshop to observe.

On January 14, 2008, Dr. Diana Engle from Larry Walker Associates, on behalf of SRCSD, went to the DRERIP workshop, having traveled from Ventura specifically for that purpose. Shortly before the workshop commenced, Laura King-Moon approached Dr. Engle and informed her that she would have to leave, and that the decision to exclude her was made by Karen Scarborough. Some time later during the workshop, one of the consultants from Science Application International Corporation (SAIC) informed Linda Dorn of my staff that the decision to exclude SRCSD from the DRERIP evaluation workshop “was made at a very high level.”

Later that same morning, after Dr. Engle and Ms. Dorn were asked to leave the DRERIP workshop, Terrie Mitchell of my staff received an email from Karen Scarborough, informing her that the Cal-FED and DWR staff “see the DRERIP evaluation as a deliberative process that is staffed and attended by technical staff

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trained on the model.” Even though a previous e-mail indicated that some of the team members may not have direct DRERIP experience, but have expertise with conceptual models.

What is unclear to the District is why these BDCP processes are being conducted in secrecy, where interested parties are prohibited from listening and observing. Even more peculiar is that the meeting announcement for the DRERIP workshop indicated that the process is designed to draw upon other sources of information, be conducted by a multi-disciplinary team of experts, and that the evaluation is transparent and documented. CALFED’s own webpage highlights the DRERIP evaluation process and notes that, “The actions that are refined through the scientific evaluation process will inform public policy decisions within the Delta, and thus will be useful for other Delta planning efforts such as the BDCP and Delta Vision.” (See, www.science.calwater.ca.gov/drerip/drerip_index.html) Thus, while publicly extolling the value and virtues of the DRERIP process to determine the planning decisions to be made in the BDCP and by Delta Vision, Department of Water Resources, and the State Water Contractors continue to exclude interested parties and the public from these important meetings. The public has a right to know what is being discussed and decided at these meetings that involve state and federal agency representatives.

We are very disappointed that technical representatives for SRCSD were excluded from the DRERIP evaluation workshop. Dr. Engle has a PhD in aquatic ecology, has published scientific articles on a wide variety of topics relevant to the food-web model under discussion, including phytoplankton, zooplankton, nutrient cycling, aquatic plants, watershed processes, and other topics. Her area of expertise is rivers and floodplains and she has extensively studied the research articles cited as sources in the DRERIP food web model. Dr. Engle has spent months examining historic water quality data from the Delta to gain insights on some of the issues under discussion, and has conducted several pertinent analyses that have not been presented in other Delta related forums, which would have provided useful context for some of the topics under discussion.

The BDCP process will lose its credibility if it continues to conduct the public’s business behind closed doors, while excluding interested parties willing to participate in finding real and lasting solutions to the Delta crisis. We urge you to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that a repeat of the events that occurred at the January 14, 2009 DRERIP meeting are not repeated.

Sincerely,



Mary Snyder
District Engineer

cc: Cliff Dahm, CALFED

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bcc: Craig Johns, California Resource Strategies
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