

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
CALIFORNIA PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMISSION
ON INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Thank you. My name is Mike Wade and I'm the executive director of the California Farm Water Coalition. The Coalition is a non-profit education organization set up to provide the public with fact-based information on California's irrigated agriculture industry.

It's an honor to be here today to provide testimony on the recommendations to the California Performance Review Commission. As you know, I'll be speaking on the subject of California's water supply, one of our most vital and often misunderstood resources. California's water supply is abundant. Unfortunately we often act as though we've developed all of the water we're ever going to get. In reality, with conservation, recycling and sensible water development policies, Californians far into the future can enjoy the same benefits provided to us by our forefathers.

California consumers have been hoodwinked into thinking that our water resources are inadequate to meet the State's needs, when in fact there are existing unused and unclaimed flows to the Pacific Ocean that are not part of any current regulatory or contracted use. What really is lacking is the will to finish what the State already started – namely, the State Water Project and **FULL** implementation of the CalFed-Bay Delta Program, as outlined in the 2000 Record of Decision.

State Water Project

The California Performance Review report recommends making the State Water Project (SWP) a separate entity within the Resources Agency. This is a good idea. The State Water Contractors, the users of the project, are required to pay all of the costs to build, operate and maintain the project. It **MUST**, therefore, represent the interests of the users, not the interests of outside agencies or organizations. It is also important to assure that State activities are run as efficiently as possible. That means embracing innovative solutions such as the proposed recommendation calling for management of certain SWP functions by the State Water Contractors Joint Powers Authority. In addition, improved efficiency can also be achieved by turning over the operation and maintenance of portions of the aqueduct system to the State Water Contractors. This model is already being successfully applied by the federal government with the Central Valley Project. It makes sense to extend this type of arrangement to the SWP.

CalFed

The reason the CalFed Bay-Delta Program was initiated was the fact that Delta water supplies were being seriously reduced because of the presence of threatened or endangered fish. Fishery biologists were dictating operation of the SWP and CVP export projects, while water users were taking the brunt of droughts by regulations. In the first four years of planning and implementation of the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program we find ourselves spending precious dollars on purchasing land and easements to protect ducks, brush rabbits, wood rats and other terrestrial species, none of which have ever been threatened by Delta export pumping. In the meantime, all of the species that were endangered at the beginning of the CalFed program are still endangered. That's where we need to focus our attention if we're to adequately serve the water needs of California farms, homes and businesses – getting these fish populations to the point where they can be delisted. Projects such as biased videos and educational curriculum aren't helping accomplish this. We need to

move vigorously toward achieving the four goals of the CalFed program--- improving water supply reliability, water quality, levee system integrity and ecosystem health, with significant attention on reducing conflicts in the system. Ducks, rabbits, wood rats and videos aren't helping us do that. All of the recommendations in the report support this direction.

California Water Plan

There is no flexibility left in California's water supply system. The California Water Plan should be developed as a document that supports regional efforts to solve water supply problems. The Plan should also provide State-level support for initiatives and projects that are beyond the reach of regional water supply efforts. Active involvement and policy guidance from the Executive Branch would go a long way to make the California Water Plan a true strategic plan for the state's water resources. The Water Plan can be a valuable tool for the public and for lawmakers to determine how much unallocated water currently exists and how to use it for the greatest public benefit.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. I would be happy to answer your questions.