

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
POLICY STATEMENT ON THE
STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD'S
PROPOSED ADOPTION OF A
WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE
SAN FRANCISCO BAY/SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA ESTUARY**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Board, thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I am Perry L. Herrgesell, Chief of the Department of Fish and Game's (Department) Bay-Delta and Special Water Projects Division.

I am here today to briefly offer the Department's perspective regarding the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary.

As you know, the foundation for this Plan was laid through the extraordinary efforts of many individuals, both within the state and federal governments and the water community. As with most products developed through consensus, however, the Delta accord does not represent the ideal for any particular interest, but it does represent progress. Progress that has for too long eluded us. Indeed, this Water Quality Control Plan, and the accord which contributed to it, are major accomplishments representing giant steps forward for all of us. However, we cannot lose sight of the fact that though giant, these are first steps; and that the task ahead to reach a long-term solution will be arduous and must be undertaken with the same spirit of consensus and cooperation that have led to your announcement here today.

The Department supports the Board's adoption of this Water Quality Control Plan, and is committed to continuing its participation in its cooperative implementation through the CALFED process, the so-called Operations Group and the upcoming Water Rights process you will initiate later this year.

* Presented May 22, 1995.

As Trustee for California's fish and wildlife resources, the Department is charged with a continuing responsibility to protect our natural resources; a responsibility that cannot be, and has not been, completely discharged through this process. We look forward to working with all parties to ensure that California's fish and wildlife resources receive the maximum benefits possible under the conditions of this Plan.

We are confident that the accomplishment represented by the accord, and your action today, is historic for California. Still, this Plan's actual benefits to Bay-Delta resources, and our trusteeship obligations to them, will remain unknown for the near future. While we are hopeful that this Plan, in conjunction with the Category III efforts supported by the water community, will yield the desired benefits for all interests, we believe it prudent to reiterate our view that a comprehensive reevaluation and possible redirection may be in order when the Board undertakes its 1998 triennial review.

Because it represents another vital component of our combined efforts to "fix" the Delta, the Department also looks forward to working closely with the CALFED Bay-Delta Program as it seeks to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the long-term integrity of the Estuary's biological resources while serving other beneficial uses.

The uncertainties that confront us in the Bay-Delta, the often conflicting needs of various species, and the difficult timing issues relating to in-stream and user requirements, all counsel vigilance as we move forward together in our efforts to ensure the biological health and sustainability of the Estuary while appropriately serving the water needs of all Californians.

Thank you.