

Director's Message

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program (CALFED) surface storage investigations represent a new era in surface storage planning, where projects are conceived to support multiple objectives that combine ecosystem restoration and water quality improvements with more traditional purposes of water supply reliability, hydropower, and flood protection. These projects would include aquatic and riparian ecosystem restoration in the Delta and its tributaries, improved drinking and habitat water quality, and greater water supply reliability for California's growing population and diverse economy. Consistent with the 2009 Comprehensive Water Package, the storage project formulations presented in this Progress Report would provide significant public benefits, including ecosystem restoration, water quality, flood protection, emergency response, and recreation.

Our existing water resources infrastructure is strained to meet competing demands and existing objectives for water supply, flood protection, environmental protection, water quality, hydropower, and recreation. The California Water Plan Update 2009 presents 27 resource management strategies and a blueprint for sustainable and integrated water management, while recognizing that the management of water is characterized by uncertainty and vulnerability due to climate change and changing ecosystem needs. The resource management strategies include implementation of the CALFED surface storage investigations to increase water storage statewide as a means to improve ecosystems, increase water supply reliability, provide hydropower generation and recreation opportunities, and prepare for future droughts, floods, and climate change. Further, the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force and the 2009 Comprehensive Water Package legislation both recognized the value and need for additional storage along with improved conveyance for sustainable management of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) through the co-equal goals of restoring the Delta ecosystem and creating a more reliable water supply for California.

Since the release of previous surface storage investigation planning documents, the planning, biological, and regulatory conditions have changed significantly, including updated Biological Opinions for delta smelt and salmon, Delta pumping constraints, new water legislation, Bay-Delta Conservation Plan and Delta Habitat Conservation and Conveyance planning, and climate change effects. The investigations have been adapting to these changes and integrating new information into the feasibility studies and environmental review. The plan is to complete the draft Feasibility Reports and environmental compliance documentation in late 2011. In the meantime, this Progress Report is an update on how surface storage could be configured and operated under various future conditions and illustrates how potential projects would provide flexibility to achieve water management objectives in an uncertain future.



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