

Committee on Resources

Testimony

Subcommittee on Water and Power

Thursday, March 20, 1997

1334 Longworth HOB, 2:00 P.M.

**HONORABLE JOHN GARAMENDI
DEPUTY SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT IMPROVEMENT ACT
BEFORE THE
HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER RESOURCES**

March 20, 1997

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to be here this afternoon to discuss with you our progress in implementing the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA). We are on the homestretch in addressing most of the issues that have been raised regarding implementation of the CVPIA, and I appreciate your continuing interest in and oversight of our efforts. This afternoon I would like to briefly describe for you the progress we have made on many fronts this past year in implementing the provisions of the CVPIA. I will then summarize for you the status of the administrative proposals and close with a discussion of the relationship between the CVPIA and the long-term CalFED Bay-Delta Program.

CVPIA Accomplishments in 1996 and 1997

* The **flood flows** created by the massive January storms will enable the Bureau of Reclamation to provide full water supplies for agricultural and urban contractors, wildlife refuges, and the aquatic environment. At the same time, supplies will be available for accomplishing the fish restoration flows recommended by the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) as part of an adaptive management program under the CVPIA. We are repairing levees and working to reduce damage from future floods. At the same time, we are working to identify ways in which these actions can create opportunities for environmental restoration in the Bay-Delta.

* The **Shasta Temperature Control Device (TCD)** -- the first of this kind -- has now been completed. On Friday, February 28, 1997, the TCD was operated for the first time for cool water conservation. The TCD gives Reclamation the flexibility to provide cooler water temperatures in the upper Sacramento River and optimize the quality of water releases for downstream salmon without bypassing the powerplant.

* Reclamation, the Service, and other cooperating Federal agencies are reviewing a **draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)** which is scheduled for release in June. This draft includes descriptions and impact analyses for the New Alternatives 3 and 4, which were developed based on public input and discussed at meetings held November 21, 1996, and January 21, 1997. New Alternatives 3 and 4 both incorporate the most current flow objectives for CVP-controlled and non-CVP streams based on the Service's Anadromous Fish Restoration Plan (AFRP).

* Reclamation finalized the **1996 Criteria for Evaluating Water Conservation Plans** and will use these

new criteria to evaluate water districts' water conservation plans. These criteria were first developed in 1993 as a requirement of CVPIA. Sixty water districts already have plans that meet these criteria.

* In December an important step was taken in the process leading to the construction of a **new fish screen for the Glenn Colusa Irrigation District pump station** at Hamilton City. Representatives from Reclamation, the Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and State agencies agreed upon a proposed plan which will be identified and fully analyzed in the environmental impact report/environmental impact statement. It is anticipated that the EIR/EIS will be released for public review this spring, with public meetings scheduled during the spring and summer months. After consideration of the comments received on the EIR/EIS, a final decision on the alternative to be built will be made and, if all goes well, construction could begin in 1998.

* The Service expects to release the **AFRP** this spring. Release of the plan was originally delayed while the Anadromous Fish Restoration Program developed and refined guidelines and objectives for use of the water management tools provided by the CVPIA. Development of these guidelines and objectives were highlighted in two public workshops in October 1996. Although the final restoration plan is still being drafted, efforts to implement sections of the CVPIA that contribute to restoring natural production of anadromous fish are continuing as they have over the last several years. These include modifying CVP operations, managing Section 3406 (b)(2) water, acquiring water, installing and operating the temperature control device at Shasta Dam, restoring and replenishing spawning gravel, and screening unscreened or inadequately screened diversions.

* In addition, the CVPIA supported other important activities in 1996 that contributed to restoring anadromous fish. These include improving fish passage at Daguerre Point Dam on the Yuba River; restoring degraded riparian habitat along the lower reaches of Mill Creek; continuing development of comprehensive watershed management strategies for Deer and Butte Creeks; developing a restoration plan and proposed work plan for the lower Tuolumne River; evaluating intermittent streams as rearing habitat for chinook salmon; installing real-time flow monitoring systems in four creeks that support production of spring-run chinook salmon; acquiring and protecting riparian habitat on the Sacramento River, and Big Chico and Mud creeks; and reducing siltation in Big Chico Creek.

* The first public announcement requesting participation in the **Agricultural Waterfowl Incentive Program**, under section 3406 (b)(22), was sent out in November 1996. The program, managed by the Service in cooperation with Reclamation, provides incentives to eligible Central Valley and Delta farmers to flood their fields during appropriate periods of the year for the benefit of waterfowl. The intent of the program is to demonstrate that the creation of waterfowl habitat can be incorporated within the landowners' on-going agricultural operations, with the long-term goal of having farms provide such waterfowl habitat after the Federal incentive program ends. To date 75 applicants have submitted proposals to provide either wintering or breeding waterfowl habitat for a commitment of 1-5 years.

The CVPIA Administrative Process Even while Interior moved forward on these and other CVPIA programs during the course of the past year, we have continued to work closely with stakeholders and the interested public to identify the best ways to implement certain provisions of the CVPIA. Last summer we prepared and released for public comment draft proposals on twelve major areas of concern identified in public meetings on the CVPIA. As you will recall, those twelve areas are: 1) Anadromous Fish Restoration Plan, 2) management of Section 3406(b)(2) water, 3) contracting, 4) refuge supply, 5) Restoration Fund, 6) San Joaquin River, 7) stakeholder process, 8) Stanislaus River, 9) transfers, 10) Trinity River, 11) urban reliability, and 12) water conservation. We are in the process of finalizing those proposals. With one

exception, the proposals should be released in final form in the next few months. The only proposal that may take a little longer to finalize is the Stakeholder Process proposal, which has been held up at the request of the stakeholders to give them more time to consider their recommendations regarding this key element of CVPIA implementation.

Relationship of CVPIA and the Long-Term CalFed Bay-Delta Program

The solutions we are developing through the CVPIA administrative process represent what I have termed the "zone of reasonableness," the common ground. While consensus has not yet been reached on all aspects of CVPIA implementation, I firmly believe that it is now important to complete that process and build upon our achievements as we move forward in the CalFED Bay-Delta process. The key to water supply reliability as well as restoration of the Bay-Delta ecosystem is successful implementation of the Bay-Delta long-term program. We look forward to working closely with all stakeholders, the public, and members of this subcommittee in this endeavor.

This concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

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