



LITTLE HOOVER COMMISSION

June 12, 2006

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The Honorable Lois Wolk
Member, California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 6012
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT FOR ASSEMBLY BILL 1244

Dear Assemblymember Wolk:

The Little Hoover Commission supports AB 1244, the measure you have authored relating to the CALFED program. In its November 2005 report, *Still Imperiled, Still Important: The Little Hoover Commission's Review of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program*, the Commission affirmed the importance of the CALFED Bay-Delta program and the need to fundamentally change how the multi-agency effort is governed.

The Commission reviewed CALFED's governance at the request of Governor Schwarzenegger as part of his efforts to revitalize CALFED. After receiving testimony at three public hearings and collecting input from a broad cross-section of water and environmental experts, the Commission concluded that CALFED's governance structure diffuses authority, fragments responsibility and lacks the focused leadership needed to get adversarial stakeholders and reluctant government agencies to cooperate.

The Commission made several findings to support reforming governance of the CALFED program, including:

- Long-term and sustainable solutions to the Bay-Delta problems must be integrated into a comprehensive water policy for California. In turn, CALFED's leaders need to refine the goals for the restoration effort and determine who will help pay for the program.
- CALFED needs a strong leader with clear authority and consolidated responsibility to forge a stronger relationship with federal partners, engage stakeholders in a renewed effort to resolve conflicts, and direct the relevant state agencies. The Commission recommended that the State's Secretary of Resources be designated to provide that leadership.

Agency leaders must manage strategically to improve performance and integrate science into decisions. CALFED cannot lose sight of one of its primary purposes: to get agencies to work together to accomplish what they could not do alone.

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- The State must make public involvement in CALFED more meaningful. Public awareness, transparency, conflict resolution and accountability are at stake.
- Lawmakers need to be clear about what they expect of state agencies and then hold them accountable for outcomes. Legislators also need to put in place external and expert oversight to independently assess progress.

The Little Hoover Commission is a bipartisan and independent state agency charged with recommending ways to increase the performance of state programs. The Commission's recommendations are sent to the Governor and the Legislature for their consideration.

The Commission supports AB 1244 because it substantially addresses many of the findings and recommendations contained in the Commission's report. As the bill moves through the legislative process, I will be writing letters on behalf of the Commission to legislators urging aye votes. If you feel my presence and testimony at committee hearings would be helpful, please let me know, and I will make every attempt to be available.

Sincerely,

Stuart Drown
Executive Director

c: Commissioners