

**DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**

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DEC 04 2003

Mr. John Clerici  
Public Affairs Management  
455 Capitol Mall, Suite 305  
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Clerici:

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on the Department of Water Resources' progress on addressing the Yuba Feather Workgroup concerns regarding flood control operation at the Department's Oroville facilities.

The Department received two letters on this subject from two members of the Yuba Feather Workgroup: Ms. Janet Cohen (February 19, 2003 letter representing the workgroup) and Mr. Curt Aikens (February 28, 2003 letter representing Yuba County Water Agency). In our responses to these letters, we conveyed our position that: (1) The flood control operation issue could best be addressed independent of the FERC relicensing process; (2) The complex issue involves multiple Divisions within DWR in addition to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and stakeholders within the multiple river basins affected; (3) The Department is actively pursuing a process to improve coordination of operations of Oroville and New Bullards Bar facilities for flood control purposes.

This letter provides an overview of our progress to date to develop a process that we believe will lead towards addressing the concerns of stakeholders. Earlier this summer, Department staff met with the Corps and the YCWA to discuss recent flood evaluations, issues, and impacts associated with flood operations, the potential scope of needed tasks, and the extent of the coordination/participation by the agencies responsible for flood protection. Through these initial meetings, it became apparent that an Oroville/New Bullards Bar flood operation assessment was needed. The Department, with the support of the Corps and YCWA, hired an outside consultant to assist in the thorough flood operation assessment. This assessment is currently underway and expected to be completed by next summer at which time a report will be prepared.

The assessment objectives are to clarify flood operation rules, investigate channel hydraulics and routing characteristics, investigate gaging needs, and evaluate other factors that affect overall flood operations. Different operational strategies for achieving Yuba/Feather downstream flow objectives are being evaluated under different storm centering and flood frequency scenarios. The goal of the assessment is for the Corps, the Department, and YCWA to reach agreement on the best flood operations for the Yuba/Feather system under the Corps interpretation of the flood operation rules.

The additional benefit of this assessment is the improved coordinated flood operations between YCWA and the Department, as well as enhanced data collection and sharing with the Corps and the Flood Operations Center. Further, this assessment

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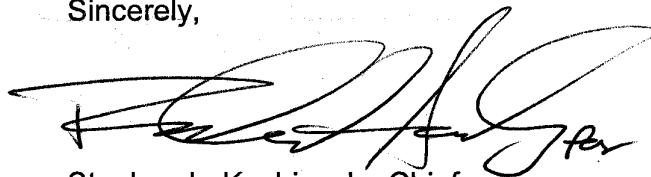
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will help the Department develop a Forecast-coordinated Operation Program. This Program will provide a set of tools to assist operators with decision support during flood events. If developed and implemented as envisioned, our reservoir operational decisions would then be integrated with river forecasts to provide accurate information about downstream river stage and flow predictions. We believe this program would increase flood warning and emergency preparedness time.

Two other activities the Division of Operations and Maintenance are developing are also worthy of mention. First, we are investigating the feasibility of utilizing the Thermalito Afterbay during major flood events to provide additional storage capability. Such an operation would only make sense during conditions when we would like to increase river flows but cannot due to capacity constraints at Lake Oroville. I have directed the State Water Project Operations Control Office to evaluate such an operation as part of its operating procedures. Assuming no significant engineering or regulatory concerns develop, we believe we will be able to implement such a procedure by next year. The second activity that I would like to mention is the need for a joint exercise between the Department and YCWA. Such an exercise would allow both operators to test communication and analysis protocols. Our goal is to consider such an exercise for fall 2004.

The Department believes this is a substantial commitment and the correct process to address this wide-ranging issue of re-evaluation of flood operations of the Oroville facilities. Further coordination will be necessary to continue on a timely and productive path during these times of limited resources. We are prepared to brief the Yuba Feather workgroup as soon as possible and are anxious to initiate our technical evaluations. If you have any questions regarding this matter, you may contact Curtis Creel, Chief of DWR's State Water Project Operations Planning Branch, at (916) 574-2722.

Sincerely,



Stephen L. Kashiwada, Chief  
Division of Operations and Maintenance

cc: Mr. Curt Aikens, General Manager  
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