THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

November 23, 2010

Mr. Jean P. Sagouspe
President
Westlands Water District
3130 N. Fresno Street,
P.O. Box 6056
Fresno, California 93703-7056

Dear Mr. Sagouspe:

Your letter to me of November 22, 2010, states the intent of the Westlands Water District to withdraw from the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) planning process, echoing the statements of the district's general manager at our meeting of November 10. I believe the district's decision is short sighted and misguided. From the statements in your letter, it also is based on characterizations of my role in the process that are contrary to the facts.

The BDCP is an on-going process intended to develop solutions to California's long standing and heretofore intractable problems of providing a reliable water supply and restoring the critically degraded ecosystem of the Sacramento/San Joaquin Bay-Delta. Achievement of these goals, embodied in state legislation enacted one year ago and supported by Westlands, will be of incalculable value to the state's environment and economy, to the millions of people dependent on the Bay-Delta for agricultural and urban water supply, and to the residents of the Delta. Westlands has to date actively participated in the process of developing the BDCP, along with other water contractors, public agencies, and NGOs. Substantial progress has been made toward crafting major elements of the BDCP. Not surprisingly, given the difficulty of the issues, several significant elements require further work and analysis. But with full federal participation and support, the outgoing state administration has focused much time and effort to create a positive foundation to move the plan forward as a new administration prepares to assume responsibility.

Given the status of the BDCP process, the promise it holds, and the consequences of its failure, it will be a disservice to all involved if Westlands prematurely walks away from the process based on unfounded conclusions or the mere fact that a range of operational criteria are being reviewed.

I will not address in detail in this response your characterizations of my role, nor will I repeat them here. But I can state unequivocally that the Secretary's and my intent, and that of our entire Department, is to develop and complete a successful plan that is consistent with the twin goals of water supply reliability

and ecosystem restoration. Toward that end, our dedicated federal agency employees have spent -- and continue to spend -- countless hours seeking to develop a permittable plan based on sound science that will achieve the twin goals. At your suggestion and insistence, we are working directly and closely with our staff and providing preliminary feedback to the parties, so we can have a meaningful dialogue on the tough issues associated with constructing a strong and sustainable fifty year plan for California's water future.

In sum, the Secretary and I firmly believe that the BDCP process continues to afford the best opportunity to resolve California's water issues. The federal agencies remain committed to continuing to work collaboratively with the state and the other stakeholders in the process, and to completing a sound, science-based plan that has the promise of providing a long overdue and lasting solution to the California's water supply and ecosystem crisis. We would prefer to pursue this course with Westlands' continuing participation. I welcome the opportunity to continue our dialogue in that regard.

Sincerely,

David J. Hayes

cc: The Honorable Ken Salazar
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Dennis Cardoza
The Honorable Jim Costa
The Honorable George Radanovich
The Honorable Devin Nunes
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
The Honorable Lester Snow
Regional Director Donald Glaser
Regional Director Ren Lohoefener
Director Mark Cowin
Director John McCamman