



# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Washington, D.C. 20240



AUG 13 2009

In Reply Refer To:  
FWS/D-SCI/R9/041920

Mr. Dan Keppen  
Executive Director  
Family Farm Alliance  
P.O. Box 216  
Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601

Dear Mr. Keppen:

This letter will update you on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) efforts to respond to the Information Quality Act appeal submitted by the Family Farm Alliance on April 1, 2009, regarding the draft effects analysis of the biological opinion on the Continued Long-Term Operations of the Central Valley Project (CVP) and the State Water Project (SWP).

As a result of the complex scientific issues raised in the appeal, the FWS contracted with a third party, Sustainable Ecosystems Institute (SEI) on June 9, 2009, to conduct an external review of those issues using a panel of experts in appropriate scientific fields. On or about June 30, 2009, the FWS was informed that the principal investigator on the contract was going to be unable to continue work on the project for 6-8 weeks as a result of a medical condition. The FWS has attempted to work with SEI to find a way to continue the review under their leadership but that cannot be done without a lengthy extension of time. As a result, the FWS is now in the process of contracting with another third party to conduct the external expert panel review. I will keep you apprised of our progress on this important review.

The FWS has exceeded the July 18, 2009, deadline to respond to your appeal. I apologize for our tardiness but the FWS believes that a high quality external review of the science issues you have raised will serve everyone's interests. The review will assist the FWS as it formulates responses to your appeal issues.

Sincerely,

Dan Ashe  
Science Advisor to the Director

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