Farm Bureau Conservation Plan

I. Plan Goals & Features
   A. No Water Allocation to Farmland
   B. No Long Term Farm Contracts
   C. Completely Voluntary
   D. All Fields are Eligible to Participate
   E. No Incentive to Fallow or Farm Less
   F. Maximize Utilization of IID's Available Water
   G. No Debt to Finance Conservation Improvements
   H. Conserve and Transfer Water to Comply with Our Commitments

II. Plan Components
   A. System improvements (including multipurpose lateral interceptors with mid-lateral reservoirs where needed) to capture canal spills and permit farmers to reduce tailwater.

   B. A positive, voluntary incentive program to increase farms' water use efficiency by reducing tailwater (with meters where needed) and reducing infiltration on fields with the highest infiltration rates.

   C. Implementing special conservation projects where practical.

   D. Utilizing research and extension to help farmers identify and implement more efficient and effective water use practices to get the most efficiency and production from the available water.

   E. A Debt Avoidance / Inadvertent Over-Run Avoidance Program administered by IID

      IID would acquire control (by lease, purchase or option) of enough farmland to keep IID's total water use (including transfers) within its 3.1 MAF Colorado River entitlement, and to help provide funds to implement its conservation program without incurring debt, either public or private.

Expenditure Priorities

A. Debt Avoidance / Inadvertent Over-Run Avoidance Program & current administrative expenses (including current necessary environmental mitigation)
B. IID System Improvement Projects
C. On-Farm Incentive Program including Metering
D. Deferred Overhead (transfer prep, legal, EIR/EIS, environmental mitigation, lost sales, etc.)
E. System Maintenance Catch-up (repair / maintenance of existing delivery system)
F. Special Conservation projects
G. Research and Extension (to help farmers choose & implement effective conservation practices)

The plan components might be implemented as follows:

The Debt / IOR avoidance program would be implemented by requesting bids and evaluating them based on the acre foot cost of the expected water yield. The best offers would be accepted. IID's total use would be kept at its maximum without exceeding its entitlement.

The farm incentive program would be developed, modified and administered by a qualified group so as to use the funds available to obtain the maximum amount of conservation. The programs developed should adhere to principles such as: effective, simple, low administration & overhead, fair, flexible, etc.

Special conservation projects could include on-farm projects which would not be feasible under the on-farm incentive program, but would provide cost-effective and predictable conservation. Many of these might also be selected from bids.

Funds Utilization

Based on a sample spreadsheet showing how transfer revenues for the first 20 years might be used in accordance with the specified priorities, some projects would have to be deferred for several years due to limited availability of funds.

Price re-determination was not taken into account.

Possible features of on-farm conservation program

1. Establish TARGETS for tailwater at appropriate levels: to obtain needed conservation and treat fairly the different crops and irrigation methods.
2. Incentive payments would be a percentage of the charge for the water used for the irrigation. (An incentive payment equal to $15 / AF of delivered water might amount to about $150 / acre foot for water conserved; & if 5 ac. ft. were used per year, an 80 acre field could earn about $6,000 in incentive payments.)
3. Consider as tailwater any infiltration which exceeds established Evapo-Transpiration for the crop PLUS a generous leaching allowance (maybe 30%).

Following is a list of some problems that would be created by the IID-proposed conservation plan which would be avoided by this alternative plan:

1. Not Voluntary
   a) Non-Participants are involuntarily bound by same allocation & pay-back, only without any money.
2. Pays the bulk of the money to those least likely to affect conservation—including absentee landowners—with no efficiency requirements
3. Encourages reduced farming by paying landowners to withdraw water from the land.
4. Requires binding, complex, long-term contracts recorded against the land
5. Imposes a permanent restrictive water allocation program on all farms
6. Uses an unjust & unfair basis for allocation
   a) Rewards inefficient past use
   b) Rewards those who disregarded IID's water conservation policies
7. It establishes an industrial-type water use & pay-back system for an agriculture with uncontrollable and unpredictable use characteristics
   a) Farmers will have to budget their water, IID will be the enforcers
   b) Farmers will need to under-use, or pay extra for water to finish crops
   c) Will be sending unused water to junior right-holders free
8. Contains an undefinable "no-fallowing" clause.
9. Takes away water rights and value from District lands with low or no usage during a short, recent historical period.