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# ORLAND-ARTOIS WATER DISTRICT

(A UNIT OF THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY CANALS)

P. O. BOX 218 ORLAND, CALIFORNIA 95963

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July 26, 2018

Jeanine Townsend  
 Clerk to the Board  
 State Water Resources Control Board  
 1001 I Street, 24th Floor Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Comments on Unimpaired Flows amendments to the Bay Delta Water Quality Plan.

Please Do Not Drain Away the Life-Blood of the Our Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys-Water!

The Board's proposed 30% to 50% unimpaired flow standard, starting at 40%, for the Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus rivers in the San Joaquin Valley, and 45% to 65% unimpaired flow standard, starting at 55%, for the Sacramento River and Delta and tributaries, would have enormous impacts in California's Central Valley.

Beyond the Lower San Joaquin tributaries and Sacramento Valley, the Board's proposed standards would pose a direct threat to water supplies in the Bay Area and result in further reductions to already unreliable Delta exports to cities and farms in Central and Southern California.

The Board's standards would greatly complicate and frustrate efforts to balance groundwater basins under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014. Moreover, by attacking some of the most senior water rights in the state, the Board's standards would set a terrible precedent, and risk plunging much of the state into a protracted statewide adjudication. Despite these enormous human costs, past history demonstrates that the Board's proposal would not significantly benefit fish, as the Board maintains.

On the Lower San Joaquin tributaries, the Board's standards would:

- require 180,000 to 490,000 acre-feet a year on average, and up to 900,000 acre-feet in dry years;
- require an additional 800,000 acre-feet to be held in reservoirs, off-limits to other users, through late September;
- increase groundwater pumping and/or reduce groundwater recharge by an average of between 118,000 to 370,000 acre-feet a year;
- cost an average \$920 million a year in the Tuolumne River watershed, and as much as \$1.6 billion a year in critical dry years like 2015
- lead to economic impacts, in the Merced River watershed, ranging from \$751 million a year to \$1.3 billion a year.

In the Sacramento Valley and Delta, a 50% unimpaired standard would:

- Push reservoirs to dead pool in 20% to 40% of all years;
- Require increased releases of an additional 1.1 million acre-feet a year to meet Delta outflow;
- Reduce carry-over storage by an average of 2.2 million acre-feet a year;

- Increase groundwater pumping by 250,000 acre-feet a year on average, and by 1 million acre-feet in critical years.

In 2014 the State of California passed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, adopting unimpaired flows would work exactly opposite the intent of SGMA. The only solutions to groundwater depletion is to stop pumping or import surface water. The Water Surface Contractors were set up to improve the economies of the communities they serve and they have been successful. To undermine them now would cause a great deal of economic damage to those communities and to the groundwater we are supposed to be protecting.

Orland-Artois Water District (OAWD) is a Water Service Contractor with the Bureau of Reclamation and is contemplating buying out its CVP construction loans which, according to the WIIN ACT, will allow the District to no longer work under the Reclamation Reform Act. By doing so the District will increase the amount of surface water they can deliver and thereby protect and even enhance groundwater as has happened in the past. If our contract water is not going to be available in most years why would we take on more debt?

OAWD landowners are still paying off the construction loan for the District's distribution System (17 more years out of 40) through annual assessments. The District was sized, contracted, and built to deliver a certain amount of water capacity. If our water supply is reduced by 50% it then means our district distribution system was over built capacity wise, which is an expense we are paying for without receiving the full benefit. This amounts to the "taking" of a percentage of the districts value/capacity and ultimately the growers without just compensation. This ultimately gets down to the individual grower who is paying for the construction through assessments and not receiving the full value of its designed capacity. A smaller distribution system would have been cheaper.

The Board's proposed Sacramento and San Joaquin River flow standards to increase fish populations, with no reasonable prospect for success, amount to an unreasonable use of water.

Our District has spent several hundred thousand dollars to promote Sites Reservoir because of the advantages the reservoir would give to the entire state. Unimpaired flows would make the project much less valuable if we cannot fill it because the water is not available.

At a time that the water system is in such dire straits, it seems foolish to break the only system we have. The California water system needs improvement not a wrecking ball. There are many agencies out there doing good works, RD 108's fuel for fish program, River Garden Farms habitat work in the Sacramento River, the work done on Butte Creek, and many more that have proven results. Why not work with people who have proven experience at increasing fish populations instead of going with those who have punished the people of this great state and, except for very questionable science, have failed miserably. 20+ years of this and the fish are worst off then ever! Why listen to them?

I am writing to urge the SWRCB to immediately end this folly, and instead pursue voluntary agreements to reasonably protect fish, while at the same time reasonably protecting other beneficial uses of our scarce water resources.

Sincerely,



Emil Cavagnolo  
General Manager

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**From:** Tyler, Courtney@Waterboards <Courtney.Tyler@waterboards.ca.gov> on behalf of commentletters <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 27, 2018 10:27 AM  
**To:** LSJR-SD-Comments; WQCP1Comments  
**Subject:** FW: Letter to SWRCB Unimpaired Flows 07-26-2018  
**Attachments:** Letter to SWRCB Unimpaired Flows 07-26-2018.docx  
**Categories:** Red Category

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**From:** oawdemil@sbcglobal.net [mailto:oawdemil@sbcglobal.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 27, 2018 10:14 AM  
**To:** commentletters <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>  
**Cc:** Mike Vereschagin <mvereschagin@sbcglobal.net>  
**Subject:** Letter to SWRCB Unimpaired Flows 07-26-2018

Dear Ms. Townsend,

Please find attached the Orland-Artois Water District comment letter for the Unimpaired Flows amendments to the Bay Delta Water Quality Plan.

Best Regards,

*Emil Cavagnolo, General Manager*

**Orland-Artois Water District**

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