

March 16, 2016

To the Members of the State Water Resources Control Board:

As a landowner and farmer in the Sacramento Valley in Northern California I am writing today to strongly urge the State Water Resources Control Board and other involved agencies to immediately work together to maximize the water supplies available for all CVP authorized purposes, including fish and wildlife, as well as waterfowl, agricultural, municipal and industrial and power generation purposes.

The Sacramento River Settlement Contractors (SRSC) are the most senior water rights holders on the Sacramento River. The suggestion that Shasta Reservoir, the largest storage facility in the CVP, be operated in such a manner as to significantly delay SRSC water diversions by more than a month or longer than they are entitled to divert under their Settlement Contracts and senior water rights must not be implemented.

As we have done before, landowners and farmers like myself are ready to voluntarily take actions to help conserve storage in Shasta, but holding off diversions until late May to early June would decimate agriculture and related economies in the Sacramento Valley. It would prevent me from planting a crop this year and in future years, and cause significant hardship to my operation, my family, and the regional economy. It would also affect other beneficial environmental activities and severely affect other species.

Today, Shasta Reservoir has more than 3,000,000 acre-feet in storage; with the March storms, Shasta storage will likely approach the 4,000,000 acre-feet mark by early April. We all agree that the winter-run Chinook salmon must be protected. **However, I urge you to take any and all necessary steps to work with the Bureau of Reclamation and others to immediately develop a CVP operations plans for all of the diverse needs that depend on water from the CVP, instead waiting until April or May.**

My family and I are currently farming rice and pasture for our cow/calf operation. This land has been in production for numerous generations in my family and your actions could potentially change the future landscape of my farm and the Sacramento Valley. I strongly urge you to evaluate this impact as you make your decisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lemuel H. Pearson Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lemuel H. Pearson Jr.
Landowner/Farmer