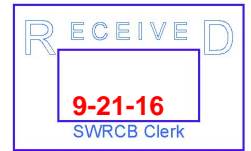


September 20, 2016

Jeanine Townsend, Clerk of the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street, 24th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814-0100



Dear State Water Resources Control Board:

It goes without saying that effective allocation of water resources is essential to the future of this great state. Here I submit an appeal to reflect policies that could defy the odds and return some of our great rivers to their full glory.

As a native Californian who worked his way through Yale commercial fishing for salmon and other seafood in the great state of Alaska, I have seen first hand the seasonal beauty, prolific abundance and commercial bounty that the return of spawning salmon to unencumbered rivers provides to local commercial and recreational fisherman along with the 100 or more species that are dependent on this critical keystone of our ecosystem.

By the same token, as a former western states river guide, I have passaged on numerous occasions down the great rivers of California and other western states and, like the Lorax, begged the question, what if?

What if, for example, the runs of an estimated 400,000 spawning fish were to return to the San Joaquin river basin to feed a host of once flourishing dependent wildlife, to provide healthy foods for our dinner tables, to support the once mighty and now anemic commercial fishing fleet, and to show our current and future generations of children the mind boggling and numinous beauty and abundance that our unencumbered great lands can provide. If only.....

In 2010 the State Water Board issued a report titled *Development of Flow Criteria for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Ecosystem*. In this report, they determined that approximately 60% of unimpaired flow between

February and June would be fully protective of fish and wildlife in the lower San Joaquin River and its three major tributaries.

Similarly, it is estimated that at least half of the natural flow from the Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Merced and lower San Joaquin Rivers should make it to the Bay-Delta, a region that forms the West Coast's largest estuary. This estuary – properly managed with greater flows - helps provide habitat for more than 500 species of wildlife, serves as a major stopover for the Pacific Flyway and provides a migratory pathway for once overflowing and now critically low numbers of salmon, steelhead and sturgeon traveling to and from their home streams to the Pacific Ocean.

I realize that agriculture needs, residential demands and the challenges of an expanding Californian population make renewal of these precious resources daunting. But I also know that we can do much better as a society working together on a host of fronts including better management of snowmelt, water efficient irrigation technologies and practices, and replacing lower-value, water-intensive crops and gardens with water-efficient high yield crops and native, drought resistant gardens. Needless to say it will take a multi-faceted approach to succeed at this important task but I am confident that great achievements will ensue when we work together.

To that end, I urge you to put the resources and policies in place to achieve those great things, return our precious waterways to their full natural and abundant potential and, in so doing, support the real possibility that we could return our runs of salmon and other natural riparian wonders to their full glory and move our minds from “if only...” to “we did!”

Thank you for your consideration and kind regards,

Sean Bourke, MD  
Chief Medical Officer and Co-Founder, JumpstartMD