



Red Mountain Resorts, LLC

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October 18, 2016

State Water Resource Control Board
Felicia Marcus, Chair
Dorene D'Adamo
Ms. Frances Spivi-Weber
Steven Moore
Ms. Tam Doduc
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, California 95812-0100

Dear Water Board Chair and Members,

I have owned a large 1200 acre parcel of land in Copperopolis, California for nearly 20 years. I purchased this property with the full understanding of a Water Flow Easement that exists on Lake Tulloch as an agreement between the Water District and the land owners for the formation of Lake Tulloch. This agreement has been honored for decades even during past drought periods. As you are well aware, certain state and federal agencies have tried to increase the fish flows which will reduce the amount of water in the lake. This unprecedented water grab will substantially reduce land values and affect the ways of life for thousands of people in the region. I have development approvals that I received in 2007 for my parcel and this pending damaging increase in water flows have already adversely impacted the value of my land.

I am very environmentally conscious and sit on the Board of the Natural Reserve System with the University of California. I write this letter of support today urging that you stop and reconsider the Board's position on increased water flows on the lower San Joaquin River to the Delta and to take action to protect our region of nearly 1.8 million people from the dangerous water policy proposed recently by the State Water Board. The thought and idea of nearly doubling the amount of water used for fish flows from our rivers and lakes is disastrous but totally irresponsible for the economy, ecology and community. I am happy to see that Governor Brown also understands the damage this position is creating. The policies that put fish first, people second is absurd. In 2015, fish flows continued even though we were in the middle of a serious drought and had serious ramifications.

The current State policies have also serious compounded the potential of increasing the salmon population. The Striped Bass was planted in the deal and are devouring salmon as predators. We just learned that the planted Stripe Bass has now been declared as a native fish. This is crazy! Now state regulators want to punish agriculture, our communities, and region for bad policy.

For example, the Lake Tulloch Basin in Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties is home to about 10,000 people. If we do not have heavy snows in the Sierra, we are threatened as we were last

year with the draining of our lake which is our sole source of water. New Melones Reservoir above us was drawn down to just 10% of its capacity in the middle of the drought last year. Ironically, independent research found that 80% or more of the fish died because the water was too warm. The fish flows don't work too. In May of last year 30,000 acre feet of water valued at \$21 million was released to move a total nine fish down stream

In the best interest of all Californians and the local community in particular, I strongly urge the Board to change this wasteful policy and stop the damage to the region both economically and environmentally. If it continues, this policy will have irreparable damage and on seven counties with a population of 1.7 million people with major agricultural production. These counties include Stanislaus, San Joaquin, Merced, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Amador and Mariposa Counties.

If continued wasteful draining of our reservoirs continues and we have inadequate precipitation to fill them, the policies of the State Water Board will make a bad position even worse.

It is important for our state to have a long term view and build additional surface and underground storage. The population of California has grown by 42% since New Melones was built and we have only increased surface storage by 3%.

Therefore, I urge you to take action in suspending anymore water releases for fish enhancement until we have known if there is adequate precipitation this winter in order to substantially refill the reservoirs. I further would urge you to ask President Obama to have the their Secretaries of Interior, Agriculture and Commerce use their power to suspend the use of the Endangered Species Act until we have refilled our reservoirs and have developed a workable and balanced plan.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely



Thomas Hix,
President