

State Water Resources Control Board

AUG 20 2015

Steven E. Gomes, Ed.D.
Merced County Office of Education
632 West 13th Street
Merced, CA 95341

Dear Dr. Gomes:

GROUNDWATER CONCERNS ASSOCIATED WITH POTENTIAL CHANGES TO SAN JOAQUIN RIVER FLOW REQUIREMENTS

Thank you for your letter dated June 22, 2015, expressing concerns with the groundwater impacts analysis included in the December 31, 2012 draft Substitute Environmental Document (SED). This document is being prepared to support potential changes to San Joaquin River flow and southern Delta water quality requirements included in the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary (Bay-Delta Plan). The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) appreciates the concerns you raised with the assumptions and analysis related to groundwater in the draft SED and the possible effects of the State Water Board's potential actions on the communities and schools within Merced County. The State Water Board will carefully consider your concerns throughout this process.

In considering updates to the Bay-Delta Plan, the State Water Board is committed to a transparent and public process. As a result of the extensive public comments received on the December 2012 draft SED, the State Water Board directed staff to prepare a revised draft SED that includes refined and improved analyses, including groundwater. State Water Board staff anticipates releasing the revised draft SED this fall. This will be followed by public meetings to present and explain the proposed changes to the Bay-Delta Plan and the supporting SED analyses. At those meetings and during the written public comment period, the public and agencies will have an opportunity to provide comments to the State Water Board and staff. State Water Board staff can also meet with specific groups to explain the analyses and hear any concerns with the revised analyses or proposed projects. State Water Board staff will carefully review comments provided on the draft SED and provide responses prior to preparing a final SED. The State Water Board will also consider all public comments and responses before considering whether to adopt proposed changes to the Bay-Delta Plan and approve the final SED.

With respect to the groundwater analysis, the revised draft SED will evaluate issues raised in public comments and additional data not available for the December 2012 draft SED in order to better evaluate potential impacts to the basins. The revised draft will also take into account the new groundwater legislation, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which

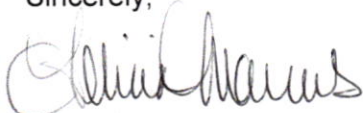
was enacted after the 2012 draft SED was released. Specifically, the revised draft SED will evaluate the cumulative impacts associated with the changes to the Bay-Delta Plan in addition to implementation of SGMA.

If you haven't done so already, you may keep up-to-date with process to amend the Bay-Delta Plan by subscribing to our email list for this topic. See our website at the address below to sign up for Bay-Delta related notices, as well as email notices for all the other programs we are working on.

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/swrcb_subscribe.shtml

Thank you again for taking the time to write and I look forward to receiving any comments you have on the revised draft SED and potential changes to the Bay-Delta Plan. If you would like to discuss this matter further, you may contact Larry Lindsay, Senior Engineer for the State Water Board, at (916) 341-5358 or larry.lindsay@waterboards.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Felicia Marcus". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Felicia Marcus
Chair