

State Water Resources Control Board

Regarding Water Issues

Hi, my name is Allen Babbitt, I am a retired Turlock Irrigation District employee. I worked 25 years in water distribution. I feel that I am more knowledgeable in this subject than your normal citizen.

This dilemma has been talked about for a long time. TID has kept its employees well informed of all the water issues that impact residents; businesses and farmers in the area. There are many things going on in this plan, but the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is not telling the whole truth about why they want 35% more of our water.

They say it is for the salmon. They say we have to keep the water flows higher now than what had been agreed upon years ago or the salmon will become extinct. TID has studied the Tuolumne river with a marine biologist for over 40 years. They have studies going on right now using fish counting weirs and underwater cameras from the beginning to the end of the Tuolumne river.

They have found that only 3% of the smelt that travel down the river from just above Fox Grove to the San Joaquin river make it. It is not the water flow that is responsible for this loss of smelt, it is the predator fish that are not indigenous to the river that are feasting on these baby fish. TID has tried to show their findings to SWRCB without even as much as an "oh that's interesting."

TID has proven that the fish don't need that much water. So why is the SWRCB still wanting 35% more of our water?

I believe, and what everyone in Northern California knows...the state is using the environmental issues to supply water to Southern California. This is where I believe they are not telling the whole truth. They don't seem to care about the facts, they just want to keep the voters in Southern California happy.

What we need is some out of the box thinking. In other countries where the water has become an issue, they had to take some drastic actions to survive. Obviously our state leaders are pushing their plan because they feel it is drastic. In Israel they have built desalination plants that deliver 50% of the water needed for cities and farming. In Australia they had a drought that lasted 11 years, they had to make some hard decisions, and one of them was, fish get 0% of the water, just that simple.

Let's put this in perspective for our issues.

1. More reservoirs. 25 years ago TID did all the research for an additional reservoir called the Clavey River project, a 200,000 acre feet storage and generation facility. More water and electricity, but the state and environmentalists shot it down. This is just one of probably many projects shot down. An extra 200,000 acre feet of water would come in handy right now.
2. Lakes: Hetch Hetchy, Cherry and Eleanor are all on the Tuolumne river water shed. They all store water for an aging water system. These reservoirs were built at a time when the population was probably 10-20% of what it is now. There have been a whole lot more showers; dishwashers; washing machines; swimming pools and landscaping put into service since then.

Keep in mind that San Francisco's water is supplied by Hetch Hetchy, it is piped all the way from Yosemite Park to San Francisco, crossing the SF Bay just south of the Dumbarton Bridge and

then dumps into the upper Crystal Springs Reservoir to be cleaned and distributed to the Bay Area.

San Francisco is the ideal location for a desalination plant. With a desalination plant supplying SF's water that would leave the water in the reservoirs to be used for other water needs, for valley cities, farming, fish and Southern California. I know that water desalination plants are very expensive, but so are bullet trains and twin tunnels!

California has something the very few states have, access to the ocean for the whole length of the state. With this natural resource we can have an unlimited supply of water to all the coastal cities for all our future generations.

I have lived in California all my life. I am more than a half century old and I have only seen three reservoirs built, the New Don Pedro; the San Luis and the New Melones.

If scientists are right about global warming and the oceans are going to rise and the State of California will turn back into a desert due to lack of rain, then we need to start thinking outside the box.

One more thing, I don't think the decision of water for fish first or people first, bullet train or secure supply of water should be given to the SWRCB, it should be voted on by the people of this state, and the bills should be put into laymen's terms without any hidden agendas, for all to make an informed decision before they vote.

I would like to add that Turlock and Modesto Irrigation Districts are the oldest water districts in California. They have been keeping records on water usage for over 100 years.

P.S. , I had another thing I would like to say, in 2014 the state approved a bond for \$7.5 billion dollars to help California's water shortages , and this state can't store any more water now than when it was approved. And now Sen. Feinstein has a solution. Spend \$600 million on water storage, \$200 million for recycling of water and \$100 million for desalination. O.K., so what happened to the other \$6.6 billion dollars. And like I said before about hidden agendas, the Senator also wants to maximize the water release's from the Stanislaus River in the same bill. Maybe we need to elect some people in to office that don't have hidden agendas.

Allen Babbitt