

Dear Clerk to the Board State Water Resources Control Board,

As a supporter of American Rivers, Tuolumne River Trust, Merced River Conservation Committee, and Golden West Women's Fly Fishers, I am writing today to urge you to take an important step toward recovery of the San Joaquin River and its tributaries, including the Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced rivers, by developing a strong and effective Water Quality Control Plan. The California Water Resources Control Board (Board) must establish strong requirements to protect water quality, double salmon populations, and create a more sustainable water future for local farms and communities.

In particular, the Board should require:

1. Specific, measurable restoration targets on the mainstem and tributaries that will support salmon recovery, water quality, and other beneficial values.
2. Specific, enforceable requirements for San Joaquin River Basin water managers to perform actions to meet salmon doubling targets.
3. Annual reports on progress toward restoration targets, and a timely triennial review to update the Water Quality Plan as required by law.

The San Joaquin is Central California's largest river, supporting endangered fish and wildlife, communities, and one of the most productive agricultural regions in the world. However, the river is so overtapped that it runs completely dry in stretches, threatening water quality, endangering fish and wildlife, creating uncertainty for farmers, and leaving communities vulnerable in the face of more frequent and severe droughts. Concern over the need for sustainable water management in the basin has led American Rivers to list the San Joaquin at the top of the list of America's Most Endangered Rivers® of 2014.

The Board must act this year to increase flows in the San Joaquin and its tributaries so that the watershed is healthy enough to support fish and wildlife, sustainable agriculture, and resilient communities for generations to come. This year's drought will not be California's last, and a healthier San Joaquin will enable the river and its many stakeholders to better weather the next one.

Your leadership is essential to ensure that critical measures are included in the Water Quality Control Plan that can help put the San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced Rivers on the path to recovery. I urge you to join the citizens, businesses, ranchers, boaters, anglers, outfitters, and thousands of others calling for the restoration of the San Joaquin and its tributaries to support robust salmon runs, sustainable agriculture, and healthy communities.