



Sustainable San Mateo County

Economy. Equity. Environment.

Dedicated to the long-term health and vitality of our region

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Public Comment
2016 Bay-Delta Plan Amendment & SED
Deadline: 3/17/17 12:00 noon



Founders
MARCIA PAGELS
RUTH PETERSON
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CHAIR EMERITUS
WILLIAM SCHULTE

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

RE: 2016 Bay Delta Plan Amendment & SED

March 13, 2017

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State Water Resources Control Board:

Sustainable San Mateo County is a grassroots nonprofit organization founded in 1992 and dedicated to the long-term health of our county’s economy, environment and social equity. Our mission is to stimulate community action on economic, environmental and social issues by providing accurate, timely and empowering information. Core values include: Fact-based Objectivity; Integrity and Transparency; Inclusivity; Intentional Collaboration; and Local and Regional Impact-focused.

San Mateo County is heavily reliant on the Hetch Hetchy water system; approximately 91% of local water is purchased through 17 wholesale water agencies represented by the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. Additionally, SSMC recognizes the severe threats to the environment from consistent overuse of water and from the increased volatility in precipitation brought on by climate change. As such, our organization has a keen interest in the Bay Delta Plan Amendment and how it will affect our communities’ water supply as well as the environment. Any plan should have shared goals of environmental protection for the long-term, safeguarding our water supply and avoiding significant economic impact, and flexibility to make changes as needed.

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The State Water Board’s 2010 report, *“Development of Flow Criteria for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Ecosystem”* 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. On average, less than 50% of the freshwater flow from the Central Valley reaches the Bay, and in some years less than 35%. SSMC supports efforts to increase flows to protect habitats and species, while balancing the water needs of all users, including the residents and businesses of our County and the agricultural users. We also encourage the use of additional non-flow measures to mitigate the impact on water supply availability while improving the environment.

Executive Director
ADRIENNE ETHEBERTON
Project Manager
Indicators Report
FLORA KAPLAN

Water agencies and users should continue and increase water conservation efforts which have proven successful in reducing usage in recent years while having minimal impact on our economy. Furthermore, water agencies must continue to identify additional water supplies. In particular, efforts to increase direct and indirect potable reuse and use of greywater, rainwater and stormwater should be prioritized. Countries such as Australia and Israel have demonstrated that limited

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freshwater supplies can go much further than a single use without having detrimental effects on human and environmental health. California can learn from these areas and benefit from our culture of innovation and ingenuity to protect our environment, population and economy simultaneously.

It is our understanding that several interested parties—the SFPUC, BAWSCA, agricultural water users, the Tuolumne River Trust and others, including biologists and economists from these agencies—have been engaged in direct negotiations regarding water diversions and habitat protection for some time. We believe that a science-based approach and collaboration towards a mutually-beneficial agreement is the best path forward. We ask that the Water Board allow the existing negotiation process to continue, while keeping pressure on all parties to negotiate in good faith and come to an agreement in a timely manner, and adopt a plan based on their resolution.

Thank you for your consideration.

Adrienne Etherton
Executive Director

Afsoon Shahrdar
Board Chair