

CITY OF GUSTINE

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March 2, 2017

Felicia Marcus, Board Chairwoman
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100



Dear Chairwoman Marcus,

I'm writing to express grave concerns with the State Water Resources Control Board's proposed actions on behalf of the City of Gustine, a community of 5,600 residents in the Central Valley.

As we near the public comment deadline, it is imperative to us that our distress over your proposal is included in the official record on the Draft Revised Substitute Environmental Document (SED). Therefore we to urge you once more to heed the requests of the numerous cities, school districts, and concerned residents who have voiced their opposition to the Bay-Delta Plan. In an area that is largely dependent on agriculture, a proposal that increases the unimpaired flows of the Merced, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne rivers by 40% would devastate a region that has only just now begun to heal from five years of drought.

The public hearings held in Merced and Modesto this past December provided ample evidence that local stakeholders have been left out of a process that will severely impact every aspect of their lives. Safe and reliable access to drinking water, our economic vitality, and our very way of life would all be jeopardized by your proposed plan.

Given the serious implications of your proposal, there should have been a credible effort to involve us throughout the development phase, but this simply didn't happen. By allowing stakeholders to comment on the plan only after it was released, you have excluded our region from providing valuable local knowledge that could have been used by your scientists and technical experts to create a plan that appropriately balances the competing priorities under your consideration.

To us, "significant, but unavoidable" is more than a term of art – it is a tangible threat and a clear statement of willful disregard for our safety, sustainability, and livelihoods. By failing to include our region in the development process, you have marginalized a community that already suffers from economic challenges and is home to many minority and disadvantage communities. Simply put: we deserve better.

I urge you to give consideration to the voices of our community and revise the current plan to reflect the needs of all the parties involved.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melvin H. Oliveira".

Melvin H. Oliveira
Mayor
City of Gustine