



Sustainable Watershed Management

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Public Comment

2016 Bay-Delta Plan Amendment & SED

Deadline: 1/17/17 12:00 noon

November 27, 2016

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



Re: Comment Letter - 2016 Bay Delta Plan Amendment & SED

Dear Ms. Townsend:

I have been working as a consultant in the water supply area for the past 19 years in California to private and public entities. I work closely with Water Board staff on water quality and beneficial use issues. I am also a subject matter expert in California hydrogeology, and understand our duty to safeguard water as a public trust resource.

We have used groundwater as our buffer against the most recent drought, but have not replenished groundwater supplies. You have a unique opportunity to help fish and allow for more groundwater infiltration by agreeing to allow for at least half the unimpaired flow to remain in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Ecosystem between February and June each year. The current reduced inflows have adversely affected the size and location of the salinity-mixing zone, affecting the entire ecosystem from micro-plankton to marine mammals.

I have talked to biologists who believe that smelt will be come extinct, and it may be too late—do you want the same to be said for our flagship species, steelhead salmon? Or do nothing and envision a future with low biodiversity from reduced freshwater inflow that has already changed the chemistry of the Delta, where cyanobacteria thrive. These blue-green algae produce neurotoxins that can make people ill and kill plankton and wildlife. We can and should embrace a new watershed scale management system for the Bay Delta. We humans will continue to innovate and find additional ways to save or create water via recycled water and better storm-water capture for human and agricultural needs.

Water is a public trust resource, meaning it belongs to the people of California. Water agencies have water rights, and you can determine which beneficial uses have priority. Please make this your legacy - to change the way that we manage all water that is sustainable for all inhabitants.

Sincerely,

Tess Byler, P.G., C.Hg.
California Professional Geologist #8131 and Certified Hydrogeologist, #928