
State Water Resources Control Board

TO: Dr. Elizabeth Canuel
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FROM: Leslie F. Grober, Deputy Director
Division of Water Rights
STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

DATE: October 20, 2016

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF WORKING DRAFT SCIENTIFIC BASIS REPORT

Please find enclosed a printed copy of "Working Draft Scientific Basis Report for New and Revised Flow Requirements on the Sacramento River and Tributaries, Eastside Tributaries to the Delta, Delta Outflow, and Interior Delta Operations" (Report) and a fact sheet that provides a brief summary of the Report and its role in the effort to update the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary. Electronic copies of these documents are available on the internet at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/DeltaWQCP-Phase2/>.

State Water Resources Control Board staff presented at the Delta Independent Science Board meeting on October 13, 2016 to request a review of the Report. The questions posed in that presentation are reproduced below for your reference.

1. Does the DISB concur with the working draft Scientific Basis Report determinations that:
 - The present flow regimes in the Bay-Delta and its watershed are not adequate to protect fish and wildlife beneficial uses;
 - There is sufficient information to develop new and revised flow requirements for the reasonable protection of fish and wildlife beneficial uses;
 - The most current science is being used to make those determinations.
2. Does the working draft Scientific Basis Report demonstrate:
 - The importance of flow in supporting ecosystem processes that benefit salmonids, smelts, and other native fish and invertebrate species in the Estuary and its tributaries;
 - The relationships between flows and the distribution and abundance of native fish and invertebrate species.
3. Does the working draft scientific basis report adequately:
 - Acknowledge aquatic ecosystem stressors other than flow and how they interact in the ecosystem;

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- Demonstrate that an approach that integrates flow conditions with reductions of other stressors could be needed to protect fish and wildlife beneficial uses.

4. Do the timing and magnitude of flows recommended for consideration in the remainder of the Phase II process capture a sufficiently wide range to inform the decisions that the State Water Board must make in considering new and revised flow requirements for the reasonable protection of fish and wildlife beneficial uses?

5. Does the use of a percent of unimpaired flow as a “bank account,” with the allowance for flow shaping and shifting to provide functional environmental flows provide an appropriate method for reasonably protecting fish and wildlife beneficial uses?

6. The State Water Board appreciates that scientific understanding of the effects of flow and other stressors on aquatic species is continually evolving. The State Water Board intends to structure new and revised flow requirements to reasonably protect fish and wildlife while providing the flexibility necessary to accommodate adaptive management. Please comment on the critical features that must be included to make adaptive management work in this context.

We appreciate your engagement and interest in reviewing our Report. Please direct any questions regarding these documents to Matthew Holland at (916) 341-5947 or by email at matthew.holland@waterboards.ca.gov, or to Chris Foe at (916) 341-5432 or by email at chris.foe@waterboards.ca.gov.