

Re: Policy Statement Opposing SWRCB Granting Permits To The Department of Water Resources (DWR) For The California WaterFix's Proposed Water Diversion Infrastructure In The North Delta

Good afternoon. I'm Susan Henas. I'm a resident of the City of Sacramento and have been active in many city preservation issues. I served on the board of the Sacramento County Historical Society and currently serve on the board of Preservation Sacramento. I am representing myself today as a Delta lover and am concerned about the historical preservation of the Delta.

The northern part of the Delta is home to 9 Legacy towns (Freeport, Clarksburg, Hood, Locke, Courtland, Walnut Grove, Ryde, Rio Vista, and Isleton). They are the heart of California's historical legacy since California became a Republic in 1849 and then a State in 1850. These Legacy towns played vital roles in supporting the 49ers and their offspring who came to California to mine for gold. Whether these communities were ports for goods exchange with San Francisco and other port cities, or whether they were built by the Chinese who helped construct California's railroads and levees, or by farmers raising crops to provide food to the miners and other pioneers, these towns all played pivotal roles in California's early history. As the Sacramento River was the I-5 of its day, these towns were born in the mid-1800s to early 1900s along this prominent thoroughfare to support the building of California as a state.

By allowing water diversions and tunnels in the North Delta, the State Water Resources Control Board will largely be allowing the destruction of key aspects of California's early history. Not only will towns of Hood, Courtland, Locke and Walnut Grove be severely impacted, but the ambiance of this rural treasure – our Delta – will be forever lost. Historic buildings in Locke, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971 and designated a National Historic Landmark District in 1990, and other towns will likely suffer structural damage from the intense and incessant pile driving and vibrations of truck traffic. Businesses and families relying on recreation and tourism for their income will become impoverished and forced to abandon their homes and businesses.

Who will want to visit these historic places during the 10 to 14 years of construction? The noise and traffic congestion will turn these communities into ghost towns. After construction, who will want to drive “Scenic Highway 160,” now a series of industrial parks full of concrete, pumping plants, and forebays?

There needs to be an expanded effort to look into other viable alternatives to the California WaterFix tunnels. An alternative plan, combined with conservation and aquifer recharge, would help provide the water necessary to sustain Central and Southern California's water needs without destroying the Delta and its Legacy towns. They are important monuments to California history.

I am asking that you not approve permits for additional water diversions in the North Delta.

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