

July 22, 2016

State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA

Dear Members of the Water Board,

Re: Policy statement against the Sacramento River diversion permits

I am writing to put into the record my opposition to any new water intake diversion project along the Sacramento River in conjunction with the California WaterFix.

My family has lived in the North Delta for 8 generations and has helped to create the agricultural mecca that the Delta. The Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta has some of the richest prime farmland in California. The Delta has received centuries of rich sedimentary silt deposits, and the land supports a wide variety of produce and agricultural commodities. Clarksburg is so well known for its wine grapes and wines that the Clarksburg Wine Appellation is considered the "Gem of the Delta" and spans three counties – Sacramento, Solano and Yolo - and stretches from north of Freeport to Locke. Adjacent to the Sacramento River and sloughs, North Delta farmland has always had access to high-quality water. Through generations of hard work, we and the other farmers in the North Delta obtained the most senior California water rights.

The construction of these intakes and tunnels will create an unpleasant atmosphere and greatly impact our quiet rural life. Life in general will become extremely difficult, with thousands of pile strikes daily jolting our nerves and hundreds of trucks going up and down the levee roads shaking our houses. With traffic congestion and lengthy travel times, the safety of my family will also be at risk. I have elderly parents and young children. If there is an emergency, I'm not sure I could get them to the emergency room and/or hospital in a timely manner because of the predicted traffic congestion.

If the California WaterFix were to go through, it would have a severely negative impact on the local farmers' ability to farm their land. Moving farm equipment on congested roads – in competition with heavy trucks and drivers impatient with traffic delays – will be dangerous. Drainage is expected to be impaired in and near the project area, and water tables expected to drop. Our historically high quality water is expected to become more saline. Some farmers may not be able to weather the 14-year construction period, and this could turn into a land grab for those national and multi-national corporations with deep pockets and plenty of time.

There are many other alternatives to these tunnels/diversions that have not been adequately considered, which would be more reasoned approaches and more effective in solving California's water issues and less damaging to the Delta. These include localized solutions such as storm water capture and recycling, desalinization, and storage at in the old Tulare Lake bed. These alternatives need to be more thoroughly explored rather than the overly-expensive and undesirable tunnels and intakes in the North Delta associated with DWR's California WaterFix.

I request and suggest that the permits for the California WaterFix tunnels and diversion intakes in the North Delta be unconditionally denied.

Sincerely,

Tom Merwin

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