

From: Chris Lish <lishchris@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 26, 2018 8:45 PM
To: LSJR-SD-Comments@waterboards.ca.gov; WQCP1Comments
Subject: Comment Letter – Revisions to Proposed Bay-Delta Plan Amendments -- Please adopt stronger standards protecting California’s rivers and the Bay-Delta Estuary

Categories: Yellow Category

Thursday, July 26, 2018

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

Subject: Comment Letter – Revisions to Proposed Bay-Delta Plan Amendments -- Please adopt stronger standards protecting California’s rivers and the Bay-Delta Estuary

Dear Water Board Chair Marcus and Board Members:

I'm writing because, along with an overwhelming majority of Bay Area residents, I strongly support efforts to keep the Delta healthy, to restore salmon habitat on the tributaries of the San Joaquin River, and to protect the San Francisco Bay and our region's diverse wildlife. Right now, there's not enough freshwater naturally flowing into the Delta to keep fish alive and ecosystems healthy. Instream flow standards, therefore, must be set. I urge you to adopt Alternative 4, which would set a stronger water quality standard for the south Delta and its tributaries (San Joaquin, Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus Rivers) that requires retaining at least 60% of the natural fresh water inflow into the estuary.

“Our duty to the whole, including to the unborn generations, bids us to restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations. The movement for the conservation of wildlife and the larger movement for the conservation of all our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose and method.”

-- Theodore Roosevelt

The health of our rivers is extremely important to me and the 25 million Californians who depend on the Delta for some of their drinking water, and the thousands of individuals who depend on the fishing industry for their livelihoods. The Delta ecosystem—including its water quality, aquatic habitat, and salmon and other native fish species—is collapsing because the current water quality plan allows upstream water users to divert as much as 70% of the natural inflow into the southern portion of the estuary, leaving only 30% of the flows to maintain the ecosystem.

“Our government is like a rich and foolish spendthrift who has inherited a magnificent estate in perfect order, and then has left his fields and meadows, forests and parks to be sold and plundered and wasted.”

-- John Muir

The California Fish & Game Code 5937 requires that the “owner of any dam shall allow sufficient water at all times to pass through a fishway, or in the absence of a fishway, allow sufficient water to pass over, around or through the dam, to keep in good condition any fish that may be planted or exist below the dam.” This code is, unfortunately, not being observed or enforced.

“It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment.”
-- Ansel Adams

The Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan Phase 1 Update, including Appendix K, achieves a partial solution by using a scientifically valid approach that aims for 40% of natural flows to the Bay and Delta, and up to 50% if needed. Establishing a 40% inflow standard may appear to be a reasonable political compromise, given that the current standard retains only 30% of the natural flow, but the Board’s own 2010 flow criteria report determined that 60% of unimpaired flow between February and June would be protective of native fish in the San Joaquin River basin. And independent scientific research also shows that the estuary needs at least 60% of the natural inflow of fresh water to maintain water quality and sustain fish and aquatic habitat. Even state and federal agencies, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, have recommended that half of the flow remain in these rivers—stronger standards than the State Water Resources Control Board has proposed. So the proposed 40% of unimpaired flow is already a significant compromise.

“As we peer into society’s future, we—you and I, and our government—must avoid the impulse to live only for today, plundering for our own ease and convenience the precious resources of tomorrow. We cannot mortgage the material assets of our grandchildren without risking the loss also of their political and spiritual heritage. We want democracy to survive for all generations to come, not to become the insolvent phantom of tomorrow.”
-- Dwight D. Eisenhower

California’s commercial and sport fisheries—as well as overall water based recreation in the Delta and its upstream tributaries—are every bit as important to the California economy as agriculture, which uses most of the water diverted from the Delta. The science tells us that 60% of unimpaired flow would be needed to fully protect fish and wildlife. Ensuring that at least 60% of the natural inflow into the Delta is the best and highest use of that water under the California constitution. The Water Board should listen to the fisheries scientists and biologists and set the bar higher. This ecosystem must be restored and salmon should have the chance to thrive again.

“Every man who appreciates the majesty and beauty of the wilderness and of wild life, should strike hands with the farsighted men who wish to preserve our material resources, in the effort to keep our forests and our game beasts, game-birds, and game-fish—indeed, all the living creatures of prairie and woodland and seashore—from wanton destruction. Above all, we should realize that the effort toward this end is essentially a democratic movement.”
-- Theodore Roosevelt

I urge you to adopt these stronger, scientifically sound standards that will increase flows to restore water quality and the once thriving salmon fishery. We can and will do our part as residents to conserve more water for a healthy ecosystem. Please do your part to support/approve a Plan that sends more freshwater to the San Francisco Bay and Delta.

“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”
-- Aldo Leopold

Thank you for your consideration of my comments. Please do NOT add my name to your mailing list. I will learn about future developments on this issue from other sources.

Sincerely,
Christopher Lish
San Rafael, CA