

TESTIMONY OF TOM GOHRING

My name is Tom Gohring and I am the Executive Director of the Sacramento area Water Forum. I am testifying in this proceeding in an effort to ensure that the goals and objectives of the Water Forum Agreement are unaffected by any action taken by the State Water Resources Control Board regarding Reclamation's Auburn Dam water right permits. A copy of the Water Forum Agreement is provided as Sacramento County Exhibit 2 to this testimony.

The Water Forum is a diverse group of business and agricultural leaders, citizens groups, environmentalists, water purveyors and local governments which, in the mid-1990s, convened to collectively address the region's looming water issues. The Sacramento region is confronted with water shortages, groundwater contamination and environmental degradation to the American River. Individual efforts were not able to solve the broader issues threatening the Sacramento Region's future growth and prosperity. Therefore, community leaders brought the affected stakeholders together to negotiate a regional solution. This effort culminated in the Water Forum Agreement which was signed in 2000.

The Water Forum Agreement is a comprehensive package of actions that are intended to achieve the two co-equal objectives of the Water Forum. Those co-equal objectives are:

Provide a reliable and safe water supply for the region's economic health and planned development to the year 2030; and

Preserve the fishery, wildlife, recreational and aesthetic values of the Lower American River.

The Water Forum effort did not come to consensus on the question of the Auburn Dam. As the Executive Director of the Water Forum, I am not recommending or advocating any position regarding whether Reclamation's permits for the Auburn Dam should be revoked. My testimony is to inform the State Water Resources Control Board of the Water Forum's efforts with regard to the flow management standards for the Lower American River and to urge the State Water Resources Control Board to take into consideration the co-equal objectives of the Water Forum Agreement by ensuring that its final decision preserves the water under the permits for the benefit of the American River watershed and by making certain that its decision does not undermine the current efforts to protect the Lower American River.

As part of the Water Forum Agreement, stakeholders committed to updating the Lower American River flow standard. In 2005, Reclamation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the California Department of Fish and Game and the Water Forum agreed to the technical details of an improved pattern of fishery flow releases from Folsom Reservoir and associated temperature management

actions. The Water Forum stakeholders and Reclamation are currently engaged in negotiations regarding implementation of an enforceable Flow Management Standard.

In conjunction with updating the Lower American River flow standard, the signatories to the Water Forum Agreement also agreed that it would recommend an amendment to the State Water Resources Control Board's Declaration of Full Appropriation for the American River making it consistent with additional inbasin water supply diversions and updated flow standards specifically provided for in the Water Forum Agreement.

Although substantial progress has been made, implementation of the elements of the Water Forum Agreement will require additional time. Action taken by the State Water Resources Control Board with regard to Reclamation's Auburn Dam permits has the potential to undermine the Water Forum's efforts by making water available for appropriation outside of the American River watershed. In making its decision, the Water Forum requests that the State Water Resources Control Board expressly preserve the water under the permits to facilitate the implementation of flow standards on the Lower American River and for other public trust and beneficial uses within the American River watershed.