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March 29, 2013

**Re: Comment Letter – Bay Delta Plan SED**

To Whom It May Concern:

I writing to express my concern with the recent California Water Resources Control Board proposal of requiring only 35% of unimpaired flow for the Merced, Tuolumne and Stanislaus River from February through June. It brings me great distress knowing that the State Water Board is not following its own report issued in 2010 titled *Development of Flow Criteria for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Ecosystem* which determined that approximately 60% of unimpaired flow would be needed between February and June to fully protect of fish and wildlife. After spending most of my life studying watershed ecology it is extremely concerning to me that the State Water Board has proposed **only** a 35% protection of the unimpaired water flow for these rivers. Low river flow impedes fish passage, concentrates pollutants, raises water temperatures, decreases dissolved oxygen, and eliminates migratory clues for migratory species. The Bay-Delta is such a fascinating ecosystem and forms the largest estuary on the West Coast providing habitat for more than 500 species of wildlife. Salmon rely on this ecosystem to spawn and it serves as a major stopover for the Pacific Flyway for migratory birds.

I am really proud to be a resident of California and believe that we need to do as much as we can to protect the wildlife, recreation and businesses that rely on this fascinatingly unique ecosystem. I really hope that the Water Board reconsiders the proposal and protects at least half of unimpaired water flow for the Merced, Tuolumne and the Stanislaus River from February through June. Not only would this protect keystone species, like salmon, but it would assist in supporting our already impacted commercial salmon fishing in California. This is an incredibly important moment and I urge the State Water Board to reconsider and protect at least half of the unimpaired water in our rivers. While I fully realize that the citizens of California need fresh water for agricultural and urban uses, there are other ways we can approach these issues. I urge the California Water Resources Control Board to reexamine water use in our agricultural and urban systems to both serve the water needs of the California population **while** protecting fish and wildlife of an incredibly important and fragile ecosystem. Through better management of snow melt, water efficient irrigation practices, and replacing lower-value, water-intensive crops with higher-value, water-efficient crops, we could grow more food with less water and meet the needs of our population while protecting our fish and wildlife.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Christina Maki, *Environmental Scientist and Concerned Citizen*

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