



Comment Letter – Bay Delta Plan SED

I am writing to you to comment on the Bay Delta Plan SED in the position for increasing **San Joaquin River's natural flow to reach the Delta during the first six months of each year.**

The Bay Area Delta forms the West Coast's largest estuary, which habitats for more than 500 species of wildlife. In addition, it is also a major stopover for the Pacific Flyway and as a migration path for salmon traveling to and from their home streams to the Pacific Ocean.

The low river flows are a serious concern as it prevents fish passage, increases pollutants, raises water temperatures, decreases dissolved oxygen, and eliminates migratory clues. This is concern for not only the wildlife that depend on the river flow, but the surrounding plants and humans who effectively rely on the wildlife and plants and the direct use of water.

Salmons are a keystone species, in which more than 100 species depend on it. In addition, we also rely on salmons for our food source and economy. However, the salmon population has continuously plummeted. Historically, populations of spawning salmon exceeded over 400,000 fish in the San Joaquin River yet in recent years, there were only a few thousand fish. Consequently, the commercial salmon fishery in California is on the brink. In 2008 and 2009, the salmon population was so low in that the commercial fishing season had to be cancelled. We can foster a sustainable flow of salmon for our food source and grow California's economy as well.

**I believe the next steps should be taken:**

**At least half of the San Joaquin River's natural flow should reach the Delta during the first six months of each year.** Flows in the summer and fall should be sufficient to maintain fish and wildlife, water quality and recreational opportunities. Up to 2.2 trillion gallons of water are pumped out of the southern Delta for agriculture and urban uses annually. We can be better stewards of our environmental natural resources.

We can replace water-intensive crops with water efficient crops. Inherently, by doing so, we can decrease the costs for growing water efficient crops, as less water is used. We can grow more food with less water. According to the Pacific Institute\*\*, "Field crops, for example, currently account for 56% of total irrigated acreage. Field crops use 63% of the applied water but generate only 17% of California's crop revenue.

Vegetables, however, produce substantially more revenue per unit land or water: vegetables account for only 16% of the irrigated acreage but use 10% of the applied water and generate 39% of California's crop revenue." We should be smarter about water use and agriculture, and can generate even further income and profit to California by shifting crops.

Increasing the water for the Delta, especially in the first six months of the year, is critical. It is not only an important environmental benefit, but also contributes to our society and economy. The

Delta is an integral ecological system for the welfare of wildlife; it is also part of our community that we should cherish.

\*\* Source: Pacific Institute:

[http://www.pacinst.org/reports/more\\_with\\_less\\_delta/more\\_with\\_less.pdf](http://www.pacinst.org/reports/more_with_less_delta/more_with_less.pdf)

Sincerely,

Connie Horng, a concerned citizen.