



To the State Water Resources Control Board:

As a citizen and a reporter, I dedicated a year and half of my life to investigating water policy in California. I know many of you have spent your life working on water policy and I respect that—many of you have helped me understand the more complex issues. That said, I've spent most of my life in direct contact with the water and land of this state, as a ranger, a river guide and an intrepid traveler. We live in a wonderful place. It is a privilege to walk the earth here, which is why I've spent so much time working to know it better.

I investigated the Public Trust Recommendations in an attempt to understand the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). My first question for BDCP Program Manager Karla Nemeth was simply: "How much water has to go back into the ecosystem?" She said she didn't know. I balked. The Bay-Delta is one of the most studied estuaries in the country. Perhaps what she meant was, I don't know what standards will be enforced. Soon after our conversation, I discovered that the Public Trust Recommendations for the Delta were well defined. In order to restore the ecosystem, a significant amount of water has to go back into it, all total about 50 percent of Delta supplies. Many people at the water board, as well as several scientists, helped me understand that and I'm grateful to them and to you. Thank you.

But, unfortunately, I'm writing to say you need to do a better job at protecting California's natural resources. You need to uphold the highest standards. We're perfectly capable of meeting the original recommendations and restoring the ecosystem, while sustaining agriculture. And I've done the research. I interviewed scientists. I drove to Southern California. I talked to residents who put in dry landscaping. I met farmers who installed drip irrigation systems. I talked to Central Valley irrigation district managers who showed me new technology. I went to water recycling plants and drank purified sewage. I met farmers who had voluntarily donated 20 percent of their land to create a riparian corridor. I went all over the place. In sum, I discovered that we can reduce water use by 50 percent—in fact, there is more "new" water in recycling, conservation and technology, than California regularly exports from the Delta.

So lowering the public trust standards will not serve any good purpose. Halfway regulations, halfway applied don't work. They never have, and the water board is well aware of that. Maybe, you're familiar with the Chino Basin in Southern California, maybe not. For 30 years, the water board knew too many dairy cows were concentrated in the area, and it regulated dairy waste inadequately. The result? The Chino Basin aquifer is now polluted forever. Nobody can drink the water there. Nitrates have to be filtered out, and the water must be run through a desalination system, which is an extremely expensive process. Are the polluters paying to clean it up? No, they're not. Citizens, taxpayers and ratepayers of Southern California are paying instead.

You cannot call that balancing methodology a success. To do the same again would be to shirk your responsibility as representative of the public. Your role is to act as the protector of the environment, and your task requires the highest act of conscience.

California is one of the most bio-diverse places in the world. It has the tallest trees, the oldest trees and the largest trees. It has the largest interconnected wilderness area in the lower 48. It has a spectacular combination of desert, coast and mountain, and it has the largest estuary on

the west coast—the SF Bay Delta, which is really the heart of it all. More than 750 species live there, 33 of which are likely to go extinct, like salmon, steelhead and smelt, if you don't do your job. They rely on you to take care of them. They cannot make the adjustments that humans can.

We humans have an amazing ability to innovate and adapt if given the proper motivation. So provide it. Set the public trust standards high, and the best people will meet you there. By doing the right thing, you'll paint a bright and vivid future for the health of the golden state, for all people, for all species.

Sincerely, Deanna Lynn Wulff