



October 5, 2015

Felicia Marcus, Chair
California State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Marcus:

This letter represents an unusual alliance. We write to you about local communities, water supply, and the environment in the Stanislaus, Merced, and Tuolumne rivers. While we may have different perspectives and responsibilities broadly, there is one thing we agree on, which is the ability of people to come together and find a compromise solution to difficult water management issues. In fact, that is something we believe can happen in the Stanislaus, Merced, and Tuolumne river watersheds.

As you know, the decisions of the California State Water Resources Control Board (Board) are of extreme importance to communities in the Central Valley, and, in particular, to those communities within Assembly Districts 12 and 21. The Board is considering releasing a revised Substitute Environmental Document to support its update to the Bay-Delta water quality plan. The Board has proposed percentages for unimpaired river flow in these rivers, which has caused significant concern in the local communities as it relates to the potential negative impacts that could result.

Water is life for rural communities, landowners, farmers, irrigation districts, and others. It is also an essential part of the natural environment for fish and wildlife. We recently spent time with leaders in local irrigation districts and conservation organizations. It is our hope that these leaders may be able to forge a consensus-based approach to water sharing in the three tributaries to the San Joaquin River. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the local community is engaged together with the understanding no party will get everything they want.

If such diverse interests can find common ground, then we request that the Board pay attention.


This letter does not ask that you select a particular outcome for unimpaired flow in the revised document. In our individual capacities as legislative leaders or as an agency official, we may continue to comment on this or other issues in separate communications.

However, we do ask one thing. It is our understanding that the Board believes in negotiated settlements between broad coalitions as often the best and most durable pathway to resolving contentious or litigious water rights disputes. Therefore, if our understanding is correct, we ask for an acknowledgement of that belief.

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Specifically, we ask that the Board include language highlighted in the introductory or preface section of the revised Substitute Environmental Document that is an express acknowledgement of the Board's willingness to carefully consider and give preference to negotiated settlements between diverse coalitions as a means for implementing and achieving flow and water quality objectives in the Stanislaus, Merced, and Tuolumne river watersheds.

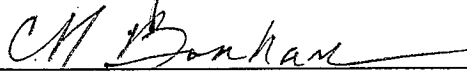
Thank you for your time in consideration of this letter.



Assemblymember Kristin Olsen, District 12, Modesto



Assemblymember Adam Gray, District 21, Merced



Chuck Bonham, Director, California Department Fish and Wildlife