

CITY OF SUNNYVALE

The Heart of Silicon Valley™

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Office of the City Manager

March 13, 2017

Public Comment
2016 Bay-Delta Plan Amendment & SED
Deadline: 3/17/17 12:00 noon



Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
Cal/EPA Headquarters
1001 "I" Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814-0100
commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov

Re: Comment Letter – 2016 Bay-Delta Plan Amendment and SED

Dear Ms. Townsend:

The City of Sunnyvale submits the following comments regarding the *Recirculated Draft Substitute Environmental Document in Support of Potential Changes to the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay-Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta Estuary: San Joaquin River Flows and Southern Delta Water Quality (SED)*.

Under the SED, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) proposes substantial changes to flow objectives for the Tuolumne River. These changes are anticipated to result in significantly reduced surface water available for diversions, thereby causing significant unavoidable impacts to water supply and the environment. The City of Sunnyvale currently provides water to 148,372 residents and an even larger daytime population with an estimated workforce of approximately 56,000.

Sunnyvale is a wholesale customer of the San Francisco Public Utility Commission (SFPUC) that purchases 50% of its potable water supply from the San Francisco Regional Water System. Under the SED proposal water supply available to Sunnyvale could be significantly reduced under drought conditions. Sunnyvale also purchases surface water from the Santa Clara Valley Water District, whose imported and local supplies would also be subject to significant reductions in a drought.

Sunnyvale has made significant strides in water conservation in the past nine years. Gross per capita water use decreased 35% from 164 gallons per capita per day (gpcd) in 2006 to 106 gpcd in 2015. While we are very proud of this achievement, further saving through conservation would be much more difficult due to demand hardening. Since outdoor use represents a relatively small proportion of Sunnyvale's commercial, industrial, and institutional account water demand, these customers

generally have fewer opportunities to reduce water use without changing their operations or incurring significant economic impacts.

Below we provide relevant information that the SWRCB must consider in conducting its analysis of the SED's impacts:

- The City of Sunnyvale is very concerned that actions proposed under the SED result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions resulting in a significant impact to the environment. According to SED Table 14-15, LSJR Alternative 4 results in additional emissions of 64,984 metric ton of CO₂e per year. SED Table ES-21 indicates that impacts to Energy and Greenhouse Gases are significant and unavoidable for LSJR alternatives 2 with Adaptive Implementation, 3 and 4. With the reduction of greenhouse gases being such an important policy for the State and our community, surely other alternatives to those analyzed under the SED should be developed and considered. Furthermore, the SED fails to identify what mitigation measures were considered to reduce greenhouse gas emission so the impacts could be mitigated as required by CEQA.
- Based on estimates from the SFPUC, under the SED 35% unimpaired flow proposal, in times of drought the SFPUC service area could experience a 50% shortage of water. The assumptions in the SED that the SFPUC can simply acquire additional water supplies during a drought are unrealistic, resulting in the potential impacts from the SED being underestimated and not disclosed to the public. Even if additional supplies were available, the SED didn't adequately analyze what infrastructure would be needed to deliver that water to the SFPUC service area. Economic impacts from a 50% water shortage in the SFPUC service area would be severe for exiting businesses and economic development in the region. Sunnyvale requests that the SED fully analyze the economic and environmental impacts caused by a more realistic drought scenario before any decisions are made about SED implementation.
- Sunnyvale and other nearby communities use groundwater to supplement its surface water supplies. Due to the reduction of water supplies proposed by the SED, additional groundwater pumping could have potentially significant impacts, such as groundwater overdraft, sea water intrusion, and land subsidence, which were not adequately analyzed in the SED. The City of Sunnyvale requests that the SED analyze potential impacts on the Santa Clara and Llagas Subbasins of the Santa Clara Valley Basin from additional groundwater pumping.
- The City is Sunnyvale is very concerned that reduced water supplies under the SED will impact the City's and the region's ability to produce an adequate housing supply including affordable housing. When the City is considering larger housing and commercial developments, current State law requires us to prepare a Water Supply Assessment in accordance with Senate Bill 610 to determine if the water

supply is adequate to serve the new development. The water supply reductions proposed by the SED have not been taken into consideration in the City's current land-use plans and water supply reductions could impact the City's ability to zone for additional housing units. Will water reductions proposed by the SED impact housing goals established in regional plans such as the Bay Area Plan 2013? Sunnyvale requests that the SED analyze potential impacts to housing production and affordable housing based on a reduced water supply including compatibility with regional plans such as the Bay Area Plan 2013 and Bay Area Regional Housing Needs Assessment.

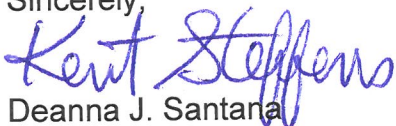
- Overall the SED has an extraordinary number of unmitigated significant environmental impacts. Tables ES-20 and 21 identify that the SED will create significant and unavoidable impacts to:
 - Aquatic Biological Resources
 - Terrestrial Biologic Resources
 - Recreation Resources and Aesthetics
 - Water Service Providers
 - Energy and Greenhouse Gases
 - Agriculture Resources

The water supply reduction strategies proposed by the SED are simply too impactful, and there are insufficient measures proposed to lessen or mitigate the impacts created. In addition, legitimate questions have been raised about whether the benefits described by the SED have sufficient scientific evidence to support reliable conclusions about those projected benefits. Under these circumstances the City of Sunnyvale feels that the State Water Resources Control Board cannot make the findings needed to adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations.

In the light of these unresolved issues and concerns, the City of Sunnyvale requests that environmental and economic impacts of any water supply reductions to the San Francisco Public Utility Commission or Santa Clara Valley Water District be fully and adequately analyzed as part of the SWRCB's proposed flow alternatives. The SED as currently proposed does not do an adequate job of analyzing potential impacts or to mitigate the impacts that have been identified.

The City of Sunnyvale shares BAWSCA's commitment to continue working closely with the diverse interests and stakeholders to develop a shared solution to the environmental benefits sought by the SED.

Sincerely,



Deanna J. Santana
City Manager

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