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October 5, 2016

Ms. Felicia Marcus, Chairwoman  
State Water Resources Control Board  
P.O. Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100



Dear Chairwoman Marcus:

It was with great concern that we received the initial revised draft substitute environmental document (SED) which outlines proposed changes by staff to the Water Quality Plan for the Bay-Delta Program. As written, this proposal has the potential to negatively impact communities and the economy in Merced County. I appreciate the State Water Resources Control Board's (Water Board) effort to coordinate a briefing for the Merced County Board of Supervisors at our board meeting on October 18, 2016.

While this briefing will be a positive first step in opening initial dialogue between Merced County and the Water Board on the SED, it must be followed with a substantive public hearing in Merced County attended by each of the Water Board members. This will afford the Merced County community the opportunity to discuss with the Water Board the effects this proposal will have on the Merced River and the extended plan area in Merced County. Each of the three tributaries to the San Joaquin River is unique and the impacts of the flows proposal may have different consequences that need to be addressed by each community in separate public hearings.

A proposal of this significance cannot be rushed through without appropriate time for local agencies to provide feedback and input, especially since our repeated requests for collaboration prior to the release of the revised document were denied. A sixty-day comment period is inappropriate for a 3,000-plus page document that took four years to develop. We strongly urge you to increase the public comment period on the revised SED.

We will be in contact with your staff to coordinate a public hearing in Merced and finalize details for a briefing to our Board of Supervisors. We look forward to continued dialogue.

Sincerely,

Hubert "Hub" Walsh, Jr.  
Chairman

- cc: Merced County Board of Supervisors
- Congressman Jim Costa
- Senator Anthony Cannella
- Assemblymember Adam Gray
- Merced Irrigation District Board of Directors

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