



Protecting Marin Since 1934

December 8, 2016

Felicia Marcus, Chair
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

Re: San Joaquin tributary flows

Dear Chairwoman Marcus and Board Members:

Marin Conservation League commends the State Water Resources Control Board for its efforts to improve the health of the San Francisco Bay-Delta estuary by increasing inflows from the rivers of the San Joaquin basin. We are, however, concerned that the initial 40% standard would be inadequate to restore the Bay's diminished habitat. We thus urge you to raise the bar to 60%, a standard aligned with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's conclusion that this level is needed to maintain ecosystem functions and protect fish and wildlife beneficial uses that were established in the 2006 Plan for the Bay-Delta.

We recognize that the Board is charged with balancing the many competing uses of the public's water resources, but the health of the estuary's ecosystem is essential if it is to continue to support these uses in San Francisco Bay, where it is a major driver for the Bay Area economy. The estuary's health – its water quality and aquatic habitat – has declined gravely under the current regimen and substantial change is needed to reverse the damage wrought by years of excessive diversions.

If the Bay is to continue into the future to provide its many services, it is essential that the Board's judgment be based on the findings and recommendations of scientists from fish and wildlife agencies and other informed sources. These findings indicate that the 40% standard, while an improvement, will not fully protect the Bay's habitat. Fish and the entire supporting ecosystem require nutrient-rich freshwater inflows that tributaries in the Bay Delta are able to provide, but more than our estuary now receives. We urge you to make the health of our Bay a priority goal of the water quality standards you are considering.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kate Powers".

Kate Powers
President, Marin Conservation League

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