



San Francisco Bay Chapter

Serving Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin and San Francisco counties



7 October 2016

Commission Members

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

525 Golden Gate Ave, San Francisco, CA 94102

commission@swater.org

Re: SWRCB Draft Flow Objectives for San Joaquin River Tributaries

Dear President Vietor and Commission Members,

As you are aware the State Water Resource Control Board recently released draft flow objectives for tributaries of the San Joaquin River, including the Tuolumne River. While we applaud the SWRCB for taking these needed steps, these objectives do not fully provide for the flows needed to restore and maintain aquatic and riparian ecosystems of the San Joaquin watershed. Flows in the San Joaquin tributaries need to be significantly increased because:

- J The 2010 State Water Board report "Development of Flow Criteria for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Ecosystem" determined that approximately 60 percent of unimpaired flow between February and June would be fully protective of fish and wildlife in the lower San Joaquin River and its three major tributaries.
- J Historically, populations of spawning salmon may have exceeded 400,000 fish in the San Joaquin River Basin, but in many recent years that figure has plummeted to just a few thousand.
- J Low river flows impede fish passage, concentrate pollutants, raise water temperatures, decrease dissolved oxygen, and eliminate migratory cues for fish returning to spawn.
- J Flows should be sufficient to inundate floodplains, which serve as critical habitat for juvenile salmon and other fish.
- J Salmon are a keystone species, providing food for other animals and transporting nutrients from the ocean to upland habitats. More than 100 species depend on salmon.

We understand that SFPUC may be especially impacted under some interpretations of the 4th Agreement between the SFPUC and the Tuolumne River Irrigation Districts. Still, SFPUC customers have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to conserve and their desire to be good stewards of the Tuolumne watershed, the Delta and SF BAY. If you, and groups like ours, do effective public outreach and education we can meet human AND environmental needs for water. We urge you to express publicly and to the State Board SFPUC's support for environmentally responsible flow objectives for the Tuolumne and ultimately all California rivers.

Respectfully yours,

Heinrich Albert and Sonia Diermayer
Co-chairs, Water Committee

cc: State Water Resources Control Board

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