



# COYOTE VALLEY

*Band of Pomo Indians*

Public Comment  
Beneficial Uses and Mercury Objectives  
Deadline: 2/17/17 12 noon



Chair Felicia Marcus & Members of the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
c/o Jeanin Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
1101 I Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Submitted electronically

February 2, 2017

Re: Tribal Cultural and Subsistence Fishing Beneficial Uses

Dear Chair Marcus and Members of the Board:

We are writing to you to express our support for the proposed beneficial uses for Tribes (Tribal Cultural and Tribal Subsistence Fishing Uses). Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians both supports the importance of these uses and their inclusion within the Water Quality Control Plan for Inland Surface Water, Enclosed Bays and Estuaries of California.

Tribal Cultural uses of the water differ from other uses because they are linked to place, season and cultural tradition. Exposure levels to pollutants also differ because of the methods of exposure. For cultural uses there are native plants which are put in the mouth, such as basket making materials, which would expose someone at a different level than a recreational user. Additionally, the length of time needed for these activities may also exceed that of use for recreation. Subsistence fishing also exposes consumers to higher levels of pollutants because of the regularity of consumption. The ability to use water in these ways is essential in cultural preservation. We believe that it is appropriate to include these uses with the Water Quality Control Plan for Inland Surface Water, Enclosed Bays and Estuaries of California. One of the reasons for this is that mercury is one of the most dangerous statewide pollutants that people would gain exposure to through these uses and it accumulates in the body. Therefore, repeated exposures become more hazardous to health. Coyote Valley and other Tribes have been working on the introduction of these definitions for several years and during that time uses are continually occurring in Tribes across California exposing them to unsafe levels of pollutants. Protection of the health of people exposed is time sensitive because pollutants, like mercury, continually accumulate over time exacerbating impacts to health. The ability to use the water safely is essential to our cultural preservation and the ability to pass on important traditions to younger generations.

We look forward to working with State Water Resources Control and other stake holders in balancing beneficial uses for all waterways in California. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Michael Hunter  
Tribal Chairman