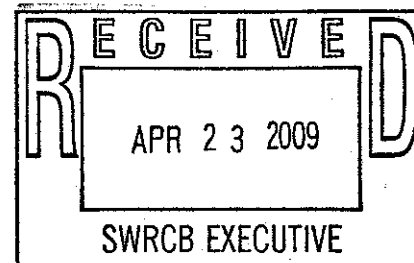


Public Comment TUC  
Sonoma Co. Water Agency  
Deadline: 4/24/09 by 5:00 p.m

**From:** "Anne Gates" <agates@Environcorp.com>  
**To:** commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov; randy.poole@scwa.ca.gov  
**Date:** Thu, Apr 23, 2009 8:22 PM  
**Subject:** Comments for May 6th Workshop on Order WR 2009-0027-DWR

Jeannie Townsend  
Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Randy Poole  
General Manager/ Chief Engineer  
Sonoma County Water Agency  
PO Box 11628  
Santa Rosa, CA 95406



RE: Comments for May 6th Workshop on Order WR 2009-0027-DWR

Dear Chairman Hoppin and Members of the Board,

I am writing to express my concern regarding impacts related to Order 2009-0027- DWR and modifications in permit terms that would reduce those impacts. The reduction in flows will cause severe impacts to water quality, recreation, community water systems, over-summering juvenile salmon and Steelhead as well as the lower River economy that depends on a healthy Russian River.

My husband and I own a Russian riverfront home in Guerneville. I am also a registered engineer in the State of California with a Masters degree in Hydraulics. I have been an environmental consultant for over 20 years. Much of my career has been remediating and protecting the public from polluted soil and water. I am extremely concerned about your decision to reduce the flows in the Russian River over the summer months, when recreation use of the river is at its peak. Not only will the reduced flow cause a significant impact on the fish and ecosystem, but I think there could be a significant impact to public health-given the large number of recreational users in the river. My family are avid swimmers in the river in the summer-along with many of our neighbors and visitors. Last summer, when flows were reduced to 85 cfs, our family dog almost died from leptospirosis, which our vet believed was contracted as a result of swimming in the Russian River. In addition, we had several friends who came down with severe flu-like systems several days after swimming in the river. Given the number of rural septic systems and livestock areas that potentially drain or seep into the river, it is a serious danger to public health to reduce the flows into the river. I hope you will consider the potential for lawsuits were a child or elderly person to become severely ill as a result of contracting a waterborne illness from swimming in the river this summer. I believe it is your mission as the State Water Agency to protect the health and welfare of citizens of the State of California. I think this would include the recreational users of the Russian River.

It is my opinion as an environmental professional that reducing the flow

to the river presents a potentially significant risk to public health of the downstream users of the river. If you still decide to reduce the flows, we urge you on May 6 to take action to protect public health, water quality and beneficial uses in the Russian River by:

- Increasing the frequency of chemical and bacteriological water quality monitoring to every week during the summer months with results posted promptly on a public website to proactively prevent water quality problems such as algae blooms from increased nutrient concentrations and waterborne illnesses;
- Including new provisions in the order to require flow changes in response to violations in water quality standards or as needed to protect juvenile ESA listed fish over the summer, the water agency released water to protect grapes from frost on April 14 to 16th so we expect increases to protect water quality as well;
- Installation of additional gauges as needed to ensure instantaneous flow compliance levels are maintained, in 2004 and 2007 compliance levels were violated under previous orders;
- Requiring a minimum of 25% mandatory conservation for SCWA customers and all users downstream of Dry Creek to help maintain flows and conserve water in case of multi-year drought;
- Requiring mandatory conservation by all permitted water diversions upstream of Dry Creek including agricultural and rural residential diversions and streamside wells pumping underflow;
- Additionally prohibiting diversions in critically dry conditions or if needed a separate order restraining those unpermitted diversions to protect water storage in Lake Mendocino and maintain higher flows; and
- Continuing prohibition on commercial turf irrigation in SCWA service area and expanding this prohibition to include all commercial turf using water from the Russian River.

Please consider the public health of the downstream users of the river in making your decision. It is not hard to imagine the litigation and public outcry that will occur if a child dies from a waterborne illness contracted as a result of inadequate river flow or monitoring by the State agency. We greatly appreciate your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Anne Wooster Gates, P.E.

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Guerneville, Ca

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