

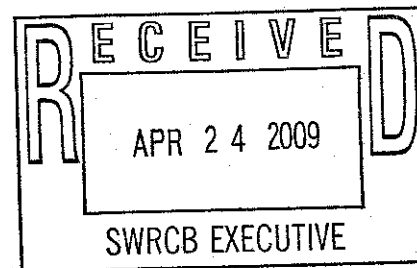
Public Comment TUC
Sonoma Co. Water Agency
Deadline: 4/24/09 by 5:00 p.m.

From: <H3ath3rsm@aol.com>
To: randy.poole@scwa.ca.gov; commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov
Date: Fri, Apr 24, 2009 1:51 PM
Subject: Comments for May 6th Workshop on Order WR 2009-0027-DWR

April 24, 2009

To:
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Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
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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 spouse and I have owned Grandma's House, on the Russian River in Monte Rio, since 1998. We started out as a B&B but currently operate as a vacation rental home managed by Russian River Getaways in Guerneville. But the fine differences in how we rent the place are totally unimportant in the success of our business compared to the importance of the river, its condition and health. We are located right on the river and the big draw to our clientele is the swimming and fishing and boating they can do right off the beach at the bottom of our garden.

In recent years, we have gotten more and more questions from potential renters as to the swimability of the river water. People are worried about the water being unhealthy and dirty. News of the lowering of the flow and its effects seems to have traveled and people's anxiety level has risen. And for the first time I am feeling insecure about assuring them that all is fine and healthy, because it seems that the government is forgetting about the needs of the little people who make a living by the river in favor of the vineyards and big commercial interests. I urge you to think of and protect us and the summer tourists we depend on whenever you create legislation to do with the river.

In order to reduce the impacts from reduced flows under Order 2009-0027-DWR we urge you on May 6 to take action to protect water quality and beneficial uses in the Russian River. Specifically we urge you to:

- Increase frequency of chemical water quality monitoring to every two weeks with results posted promptly on a public website to proactively prevent water quality problems such as algae blooms from increased nutrient concentrations
- Include 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
- 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 multiyear drought.
- Mandatory conservation by all permitted water diversions upstream of Dry Creek including agricultural and rural residential diversions and stream-side wells pumping underflow
- Additional prohibitions in the Order on diversions that are not permitted 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
- Keep order prohibition on commercial turf irrigation in SCWA service area and expand to include all commercial turf using water from the Russian River

We believe that modifying the order to include these provisions will improve protection of water quality, juvenile endangered fish and likely result in somewhat higher flows due to reduced diversions. We greatly appreciate your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Heather Smith
Heather Smith
Grandma's House
20280 River Blvd.
Monte Rio, CA 95462

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