

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

From: "Karen" <Karen@WestSonomaInn.com>
To: randy.poole@scwa.ca.gov; commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov;
Karen@WestSonomaInn.com
Date: Thu, Apr 23, 2009 1:46 PM
Subject: Russian River Water Flow

April 23, 2009

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

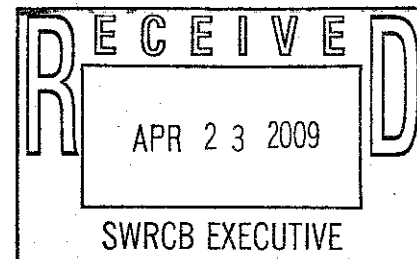
Santa Rosa, CA 95406

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

Dear Chairman Hoppin and Members of the Board,

We are business owners in Guerneville, CA and we are writing to express our 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.

The impact on the environment we're sure you have been fully apprised of, but of the second we wish to tell you as employers in the area that there is no doubt of it's negative impact on our business and the business of others



in the tourism industry here in Russian River. We own a 36 unit property and spa. During the summer months a large proportion of our guests come to Guerneville to spend time enjoying recreation activities on the river. They kayak, canoe, fish, raft, float and swim in the river.

The local economy is driven by tourism – it's always seasonal, which creates financial challenges in itself - but during this time of market and economic uncertainty we are particularly vulnerable to any changes that could result in decreased tourist traffic. We are not indulging in hysteria when we tell you that another component stressing our local economy will result in us laying off our staff and perhaps being forced to sell or foreclose our business.

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 multi-year drought.

- Mandatory conservation by all permitted water diversions upstream of Dry Creek including agricultural and rural residential diversions and streamside

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,

Karen O'Brien and Naveed Haneef

Owners

West Sonoma Inn & Spa

14100 Brookside Lane

Guerneville, CA 95446

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