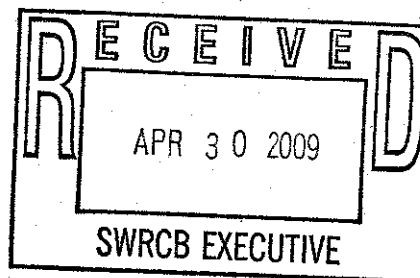


**Burke's Canoe Trips**8600 River Road  
Forestville, CA 95436  
707 887-1222

April 30, 2009

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

Dear Chairman Hoppin and Members of the Board:

As a third generation resident of the lower Russian River and as co-owner of a thriving Russian River Business known as Burke's Canoe Trips in Forestville on the lower Russian River I am indeed gravely concerned about the severe and extremely negative impacts that will result from order 2009-0027 DWR as currently proposed. I very much object to the order as written.

As proposed, the current urgency Change Order would most definitely have a devastating effect on lower Russian River water quality and appearance, water temperature, fisheries, public health, aesthetics, navigability and recreation including canoeing which is a highly popular and much loved tradition on the Russian River. Needless to say, clean cool sufficient water is what is good for a healthy river and healthy fisheries and it is also clean, cool sufficient water that is good not only for our canoe trip business, but for all Russian River regions and Sonoma County commerce.

It is the Russian River itself that draws countless locals and visitors alike to its banks and a viable Russian River will continue to be a world-renowned vacation destination second to none. And a viable Russian River will continue to draw visitors from virtually all over the world. Viable is the operative word!

As proposed, the current Urgency Change Order would have a devastating effect on Russian River recreation and commerce and the family owned and operated business that I own with my brother, Bob, would very likely not be able to open for the first time in our lives. My family has an overall history of 90 years on the Russian River and 50 of those years is at our present business location.

We are expecting a very busy season. Many families, company employee parties, Scout groups, Church groups, etc. have already booked their annual canoe trips with us. As we gear up for the upcoming busy canoe season we are hiring a large staff to work for us again this summer. We have ordered 100 new canoes to replace some of our older canoes and the new canoes will be delivered to us in two days from today. Perhaps I'll bring photos of this on May 6<sup>th</sup>. We are contracting with local bus companies to charter full-size busses for shuttle service as we do each year. We hire bus service for the whole summer right into October. We are now accepting deliveries of life jackets, paddles, Coca-Cola vending machines, ice machines and much more. We are ready for a huge season. All we need is enough water!

It may surprise some to hear that the Russian River should be expecting a huge season given the fact that the economy is in the midst of an economic downturn. However, the Russian River offers close proximity to the multitudes and fun adventures such as canoeing which is downright reasonable in price and good for people to do - even if they and their families are just trying to get away from it all to divorce themselves from their concerns.

According to the Sonoma County Economic Development Board, over \$250 million tourist dollars are spent each year on recreational activities in the county. In 2008, Sonoma County hotel visitors (54%)

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who were surveyed ranked outdoor recreation and adventure as their number one Sonoma County interest. Because of this interest in outdoor recreation, Sonoma County now enjoys the highest destination growth rate in the state.

Unincorporated areas (with 37.7% of the County's Transit Occupancy Tax) and campgrounds (accounting for \$50 million dollars in annual tourist spending) were a major contributor to breaking the billion dollar spending mark (\$1.32 billion tourist dollars) for Sonoma County tourists in 2006. The Russian River is consistently one of the top unincorporated tourist destinations in Sonoma County.

National figures published by the U.S. Travel Data Center also support the fact that the Russian River Region is a top destination for Eco-tourism, as they cite statistics showing that 43 million Americans are ecologically concerned. Recreational tourists strongly consider the ecological values of Sonoma County when traveling, and the Russian River is the closest major navigable river/Eco-tourist destination (to a busy international airport and the San Francisco Bay Area).

I urge you not to lower flows below 85cfs. Under previous emergency change orders, the river's flow rate was never dropped below 85cfs. Even at 85cfs, there were negative impacts on water quality, public health, noxious weed growth, fisheries, navigability and recreational values. A flow reduction to 35cfs would be devastating.

Thank you for your kind consideration of my concerns. I know how much our beautiful river means to you, and I only ask that you please strive to balance the needs of our water quality, fisheries, wildlife and economy against this emergency Chang Order.

Respectfully yours,



Linda L. Burke

Cc: Randy Pool, General Manager/Chief Engineer  
Sonoma County Water Agency