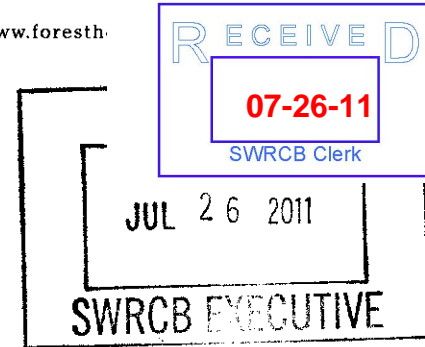




## CALIFORNIA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

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July 21, 2011



Mr. Charlie Hoppin, Chair  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Water Diversion Reporting requirements by SWRCB

Dear Chairman Hoppin,

The California Forestry Association (CFA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on current and new Water Diversion Measurement standards required by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). Many CFA members, including both small and large forest landowners, have been actively involved in reporting water diversions over the years, and as the statewide organization representing many of these landowners, CFA would like to address some particular issues—and suggest possible changes to—these SWRCB reporting standards.

Specifically, CFA and its members have the following concerns with both the current and future new reporting standards:

**The current reporting standards are not well-suited for water diversions associated with timber harvest and forest management operations.**

- Water diversion quantities associated with forest management vary widely with season and location. The diverted quantities are generally small and are normally diverted by means of pumps on water trucks primarily for road dust abatement and fire prevention within the watershed of origin.
- Timber harvest operations are often dispersed over large areas, and often use several water sources for any given operation.
- Forest water sources include spring-fed waterholes that do not flow off-site (that are currently exempt from reporting requirements), off-channel water-holes that are fed by adjacent streams or rivers, and direct drafting of water from streams, rivers, lakes and/or reservoirs. Other water sources may include municipal water sources, such as metered fire hydrants. Recording the actual number of truck-loads of water used from each of these sources for timber operations is difficult.
- From year-to-year, timber operations generally move from area to area. This transient characteristic makes it nearly impossible for large landowners to report their water diversions on the SWRCB "Supplemental Statement" forms that allow landowners to file a statement of use every three years. Instead, they must report their use on the "Initial Statement of Water Diversion and Use" (Initial Statement) form. Because "Initial Statement" forms are required to be filed at the time of the first water diversion, this essentially requires most larger forest landowners to report all of their water diversions each year on this "Initial Statement" forms. We feel that this was not the original intent of this reporting structure.
- Emergency water use for operations such as wildland fire control are nearly impossible to report, as these are done often by a number of different contractors in an emergency condition.
- The actual reporting forms employed by the SWRCB to report water use do not work well for many timber operations, where actual "locations" of harvest move from month-to-month or season-to-season. The required forms appear to be better suited for operations where diversions do not move over time, such as agricultural operations.

**The new monthly reporting procedure, scheduled to take effect in 2012, has provisions that will further complicate forest water-diversion reporting.**

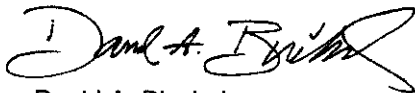
- The monthly water-diversion estimates will be difficult to obtain. Major variations in water needs, primarily predicated upon weather and ground conditions, will make monthly recordkeeping very difficult for most forest landowners.
- The "Best Available Technologies" and "Best Professional Practices" standards stated in the new regulations do not apply well to forest operations. Forest water diversions are almost exclusively through mobile pumps on water trucks, not through diversion canals, weirs, or other structures where gauging technology can make more accurate estimates of water use.

It is important to note that virtually all forest-related water diversion use is associated with operations regulated by other state agencies. The conduct of water drafting operations and the actual design, construction, and maintenance of waterholes, drafting pads, and other structures associated with water drafting, are currently regulated by CAL FIRE, the Calif. Dept. of Fish and Game and Regional Water Quality Control Boards through the Timber Harvesting Plan (THP) review and approval process, and through other agency-specific permitting procedures.

CFA proposes that the SWRCB adopt a policy of requiring a one-time general report of forest-related water diversion that could be used by forest landowners. This general report would estimate water-diversion quantities for each watershed. The benefits of this possible simplified reporting procedure include benefits for both the reporting landowners and benefits to the SWRCB in the form of fewer reports to read, review and file.

We hope that the SWRCB considers this proposal, and CFA pledges its support to assist the SWRCB in any effort to streamline and simplify the reporting procedures. Please call me at any time to discuss this proposal.

Sincerely,



David A. Bischel  
President

cc: Richard Satkowski, Division of Water Rights, SWRCB