



Comment Letter- Bay Delta Plan SED

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As a lifelong resident of California, I am greatly concerned for the condition of the San Joaquin River, its tributaries, and the San Francisco Bay Delta. These waterways represent more than water resources and navigable channels. They link this portion of the North American continent to the Pacific Ocean. This ecological connection transcends time and place, and embodies the living connection of the past, the present and the future health of this region and beyond.

Bay and Delta ecosystems are at serious risk. The Water Board's 2010 study, "Development of Flow Criteria for the Sacramento- San Joaquin Delta Ecosystem" determined that protection of these resources will require 60% of unimpaired flows from February and June. These seasonal flows are critical for maintaining the natural processes and species that sustain the health of the system.

The Plan SED should ensure the 60% unimpeded winter flows and allocate sufficient summer and fall flows to maintain fish and wildlife, water quality and recreation. California's historic summer drought may worsen substantially with global climate change. Provisions must be made to sustain a healthy aquatic connection through the dry season.

Historic populations of salmonids, sturgeon and Delta smelt are at alarmingly low levels, and may be near extinction. It is our responsibility to maintain these populations and their habitats at sustainable levels.

Healthy fisheries and salmon populations are extremely important to ecological systems associated with them, and contribute greatly to California's economy and green jobs.

The Bay- Delta estuary provides habitat for hundreds of species, including numerous important fish and bird species. It is globally significant for its rich ecological productivity, and should be treated with due respect.

California agencies and planners need to reduce the demands for diverted water from these watersheds, including the Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced Rivers. These rivers are already greatly impaired by impoundments and diversions. It is not sensible to keep stressing these ecosystems as has been done over the past 100 years.

While the Bay- Delta estuary and the rivers that feed it seem great, it is a proven fact that they are not inexhaustible, and are sensitive to manipulation. Prudence, efficiency, and humility are much needed in our approach to "managing" the waters of this great land.

Sincerely, Clay Knopf
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