

MID MERCED IRRIGATION DISTRICT

March 20, 2013



State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-0100

ATTN: SED COMMENT LETTERS

I am writing to you as a business leader in Merced County, President of Hilltop Ranch, and the elected Vice President of the Merced Irrigation Board of Directors. I would like to express my deep concern and objections to the proposal by the State Water Resources Control Board to release up to 35 percent of the unimpaired flow of the Merced River. By almost any measure, the communities in Merced County are among the most impoverished in both the state and the nation.

The proposed Bay Delta Draft Substitute Environmental Document significantly under-estimates the impacts to our community's economy. It equally ignores significant problems for our conjunctively managed groundwater. I respectfully request that you revisit this proposal and consider more meaningful alternatives with less impact to our region.

The intent of this proposal aims to improve the health of the Bay Delta. However, there remains no substantive evidence that the increased flows will improve the Delta ecology. At the same time that the State Board is turning an eye toward water on the Merced River, a blind eye is being turned to other ecological challenges in the Delta, including pollution, fish harvesting policies and predation of small salmon by non-native sport fish.

It is absolutely unfair to punish the people of the San Joaquin Valley for challenges that are beyond the financial and geographical bounds of our community. That's even more true given that MID has been releasing water for the benefit of salmon since the 1870s.

We don't produce microchips or movies in the San Joaquin Valley. We produce some of the finest fruits, nuts and agriculture products in the world. Water is among the few resources held by our disadvantaged communities in Merced County. A third of our economic activity is related to agriculture production and processing. Please keep in mind that farmers and farm workers go shopping, they rent movies, they buy clothing, they buy insurance and they eat at restaurants.

Please also carefully consider the implications to our groundwater, used by numerous cities and farmers alike. MID is the only entity to provide active and passive recharge to the basin. The proposal you've put forward will create a synergistic effect that leads to a single destination: an over-drafted aquifer. I respectfully urge you to consider alternatives aside from increasing the flow of water from those who need it the most and have a historic right to it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Long". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dave Long
MID Board Vice President