
Resource Renewal Institute

Innovations for a Sustainable Future



BY EMAIL ONLY

March 18, 2013

Jeanine Townsend
Clerk of the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95814-0100
EMAIL: commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov

RE: “Comment Letter – Bay Delta Plan SED”

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Huey Johnson and I am the President of Resource Renewal Institute. RRI is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1985 to address some of the country’s most pressing environmental problems, including freshwater, energy, biodiversity, public health and climate stabilization. I have over fifty years of experience in business, government, and nonprofit sectors, including leadership roles as California’s Resources Agency Secretary under Gov. Jerry Brown’s first administration and co-founder of the Trust for Public Land.

I am following the SWRCB’s Delta Outflow process now underway. In particular, I am closely following this first phase in which the Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus Rivers will each contribute their respective instream flows to the ultimate Delta outflow target. I want to be on record in support of the following:

1. At least half of the San Joaquin River’s natural flow should reach the Delta during the first six months of each year. Flows in the summer and fall should be sufficient to maintain fish and wildlife, water quality and recreational opportunities.
2. Low river flows impede fish passage, concentrate pollutants, raise water temperatures, decrease dissolved oxygen, and eliminate migratory clues.
3. Historically, populations of spawning salmon may have exceeded 400,000 fish in the San Joaquin River Basin, but in many recent years that figure has plummeted to less than 2,000 fish.
4. Salmon are a keystone species, providing food for other animals and transporting nutrients from the ocean to upland habitats. More than 100 species depend on salmon.
5. The commercial salmon fishery in California is on the brink. The salmon population was so low in 2008 and 2009 that the commercial fishing season had to be cancelled.
6. The Bay-Delta forms the West Coast’s largest estuary, providing habitat for more than 500 species of wildlife. It serves as a major stopover for the Pacific Flyway and as a migration path for salmon, steelhead and sturgeon traveling to and from their home streams to the Pacific

Ocean.

7. Up to 6.8 million acre-feet (2.2 trillion gallons) of water per year are pumped from the southern Delta for agriculture and urban uses.
8. Through better management of snowmelt, water efficient irrigation practices, and replacing lower-value, water-intensive crops with higher-value, water-efficient crops, we could grow more food with less water

Please do not hesitate to contact me if more clarification of any of the above points is necessary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Huey D. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "H" and "J".

Huey D. Johnson
President
Resource Renewal Institute