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Jeanine Townsend
Clerk of the Board
State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
PO Box 100
Sacramento CA 95814-0100

Re: The Bay Delta Water Control Plan

Dear Members of the SWRCB:

I recently attended a presentation on the upcoming decision by the SWRCB regarding the updating of the Bay Delta Water Control Plan. I learned that the policy decisions embodied in this plan will have critical impacts in a number of directions, all of them important as well as controversial.

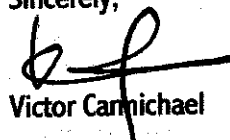
The key issue of course is the plummeting salmon population in the San Joaquin River Basin from historical numbers in the 400,000 range down to in recent years a mere 2000 fish, essentially wiping out that fishery to the extent that the 2008-9 commercial salmon season had to be canceled. With research available regarding the effects of various unimpaired flow levels ranging from 30% to 60%, the Board I understand is poised to recommend (inexplicably) only 35%. Low flow is one of chief causes for the decline of salmon. In addition to the economic cost of a crashed commercial fishery, concordant other deleterious ecological effects are widespread since over 100 other species depend on salmon.

Diversion of water adequate for power generation, urban and agricultural needs are, of course, crucial but the Board needs to stand up to entrenched interests which take advantage of under-priced water. For instance ill advised water intensive crops such as rice, alfalfa and cotton which account for only 17% of crop revenues but use a large portion of the massive agriculture under-priced water allocation. These crops should be discouraged. Lowering available water is one way to do it.

Residential consumption of water is down in recent years but still salmon are not successfully rebounding. We as citizens are doing our part to conserve water but policies at the State level must match that commitment even if it takes forcing significant readjustments in the California agricultural sector.

Please I urge you to consider a larger unimpaired flow down the three rivers that feed the San Joaquin Delta - the Merced, Tuolumne and the Stanislaus.

Sincerely,


Victor Carmichael

