

**From:** James Tedford <jamesstedford@gmail.com>  
**To:** <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>  
**Date:** 2/9/2010 11:01 AM  
**Subject:** COMMENT LETTER - 2/16/10 BOARD MEETING ITEM: ORDER - KERN RIVER

Dear board members,

My wife and I recently moved from Pasadena to Bakersfield for work after finishing graduate school. We had heard stories about rafting on the mighty Kern River and were excited about its beauty and possibilities for recreation. So we were disappointed to learn shortly after our arrival in Bakersfield that the riverbed that runs through town does not have any water in it.

Now that we have learned that the state controls the river water -- and your staff has determined there is water not under contract to business interests -- we want you to know that we support the City of Bakersfield's application to let the available water flow through the riverbed. We understand that, among its many benefits, it will help to replenish aquifers in the region and thus not be merely a cosmetic touching up of the town.

That said, as someone who uses the bike trails and parks along the river, I can tell you that natural beauty is extremely important. It is one of God's ways of buoying the human spirit. Water used for food may give us a way to live, but water used for beauty gives us more to live for. It is a false choice to pick one or the other. Human beings must have both.

Jesus tells us that "man cannot live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." Rivers are one of those words spoken by God. We silence God's words at our peril.

On a clear day after a rain, with the mountains in the distance, a river running through Bakersfield would be spectacular, a wellspring of civic pride as well as an economic engine.

We are having our first child in May, and we would love for our son to grow up with a river in his backyard. It would be so American. And so beautiful.

Please allow the Kern River to return to Bakersfield. Thank you for listening, and for your service to our community.

Sincerely,

James Tedford  
Ph.D. candidate, Fuller Theological Seminary

Julie Tedford  
Staff attorney, Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance

