10 March 2006

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I am writing to request that the Division add two additional workshops on the Draft Policy Instream Flow Regulations because the 2/6/08 Technical Workshop was...

1. Held at a facility where the attending stakeholders could not possibly have been accommodated. The room could hold 100, but was overfilled with dozens more, and dozens of people were turned away. And,
2. The State Water Resources Control Board staff said to those turned away that there would be a second session for them later in the day, which was canceled and not conducted as promised. And,
3. Even those that were allowed to stay at the workshop were not able to have all of their questions dealt with because they were required to leave at 5:00. And,
4. The Santa Rosa location required people from the northern communities in the Mattole River Basin in Humboldt County to drive as much as 4 hours each way to attend a workshop from which they could be turned away. And,
5. The video that was to be made available to the public is of such low sound and visual quality that it serves little value as public record for those unable to attend, or for those who were able to attend but not understand the proceedings. And,
6. The 1:00 time slot reduced attendance by working people who may not have had the scheduling flexibility to miss a day's work, particularly considering the travel time factor.

I respectfully request that the SWRCB hold two additional workshops at some time in the intervening five week period that will meet the following basic requirements:

Requirements:

A. Use a large enough venue to accommodate the large turnout that the first workshop demonstrated could be in attendance.

B. Conduct a double session that will provide an opportunity for those who cannot take time off work. Hold a session after 5:00 p.m.

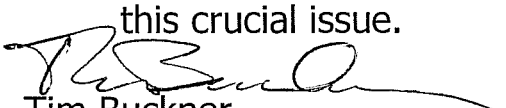
C. Have two locations, one in Santa Rosa or Petaluma, and one in Ukiah or Willits, to make the meetings more accessible to the working people.

D. Have more staff available, perhaps in break-out sessions, to answer the multitude of questions that were far too much to handle at the first workshop.

E. Guarantee qualified personnel and equipment on site to provide an adequate video and sound record of the proceedings, since these "watershed" changes of in-stream flow regulations will affect thousands of stakeholders in the numerous coastal watersheds of five counties. Further justification for the hearings is the fact that these regulations will cost the group of applicants many millions of dollars (at a minimum) to implement. I would seem that the Division should do nothing less to serve the public from whom they are demanding so much.

F. Project applicants have had virtually no input during the development of this POLICY. Even the contributions of the consultants and lawyers listed in the POLICY Appendix have not helped to reduce the extraordinary costs associated with attempted compliance with the POLICY. In truth, the POLICY will create exponential growth in demand and costs for legal and consulting services. These workshops might be the only real "face time" that project applicants, both present and future, will get with division staff before the POLICY moves to the next level.

Thank you for you consideration of this request in regards to this crucial issue.



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