

commentletters - Comment Letter AB2121 Policy

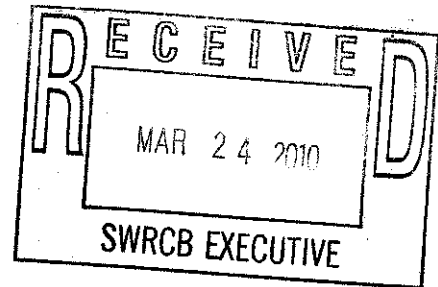
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Date: 3/25/2010 12:47 AM
Subject: Comment Letter AB2121 Policy

State Water Resources Control Board

Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board

1001 I Street, 24th Floor

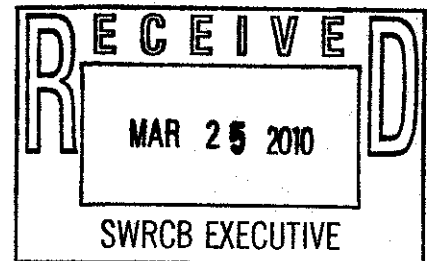
Sacramento, CA 95814



Subject: Comment Letter – AB2121 Policy

February 2010 Draft North Coast Instream Flow Policy

Strong Objection to this Draft Policy and Request for Extension of Time



The proposed legislation would make drastic and abrupt changes to the water allowed for use at The Sea Ranch. It is urgent that there be an extended period for comment that would clarify the impacts of this policy on the immediate region at the mouth of the Gualala River. I understand that the policy proposed has not been examined in a way that accommodates local situations and the particular characteristics of river flow in this location or its immediate effects on this locale.

The area in question is the location for a planned community, The Sea Ranch, that has received continuing recognition as a leading example of careful consideration of the environment and innovative attention to ecological considerations ever since its initial planning in the early 1960's. The Sea Ranch Association has continued this commitment to careful adjustment of all its development in buildings, n lot layout that leaves large segments of the development open as common land that is not irrigated but left in a natural state, in the placement and configuration of roads and in a major commitment to landscape management, including an extensive fire management program. These have all ben guided by the expressed community goal to "live lightly on the land." As part of that continuing commitment The

ch Association has made significant improvements to its water storage system and gives careful attention to water conservation.

These measures, together have maintained its reputation as an exceptionally well planned and designed community based on ecological planning. The Sea Ranch has attracted significant investment to the north coast, both within its boundaries and in Gualala and areas to the north that provide services and employment and have gained visibility and market value through the development that has grown up at The Sea Ranch and surroundings.

All this is, of course, dependent on predictable water supply. The Sea Ranch is not asking for exemption from concern for environmental issues; quite the contrary. What is requested is a process that accounts for the full range of environmental, social and economic impacts and is alert to the specific conditions of the immediate area, rather than establishing arbitrary standards that do not take account of local conditions or to commitments that have been made before during planning, or to the future that can be projected for this region and its citizens. This will take time, careful analysis and extensive opportunity for community input. The policy presently being proposed, I understand, would reduce the ability of The Sea Ranch to draw water from underground aquifers to drastically reduced levels; a condition that would severely threaten the viability and safety of a community that has been especially responsive to its environment, has important economic benefits for the neighboring areas and Sonoma Count and has been built up on the trust established by prior, responsible arrangements regarding access to water. As formulated presently, the proposed measures could effectively destroy this community..

Please reconsider this policy, allow for extensive review and modification, and devise a system that is locally and environmentally responsible for the State and its locales, and does not severely burden the many citizens who have invested their lives in this place and the development of an ecologically attentive community.

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