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# California State Senate



**SENATOR  
JIM NIELSEN**

FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
HEALTH  
INSURANCE  
VETERANS AFFAIRS

February 5, 2015

Mrs. Felicia Marcus, Chair  
State Water Resources Control Board  
PO Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812

Dear Chair Marcus,

I write to you concerning the Upper North Fork Feather River Hydroelectric Project (FERC #2105) Water Quality Certification.

It is my understanding that after nine years the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) released their Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) as it relates to this project. I am opposed to the Water Board staff recommendation in the DEIR.

The report examines two alternatives for cooling water to a maximum of twenty degrees Celsius at the Rock Creek/Cresta reaches of the Feather River. Both alternatives call for a variety of actions to take cold water from Lake Almanor and both alternatives include installation of thermal curtains in Almanor and Butt Lake. Still to this day, after twelve years since PG&E began their licensing process, the community has received no evidence that river temperatures were cooler prior to the construction of the existing hydroelectric facilities.

The Board is no doubt aware of the enormous community opposition to these proposals. I too believe that the benefits simply do not outweigh the costs. Not only are thermal curtains potentially very costly to install and maintain, the economic and environmental impact to nearby communities must be considered.

Drawing immense quantities of cold water from these shallow water bodies will undoubtedly upset the ecological balance and corollary recreational and economic benefits these lakes provide. Furthermore, the downstream benefits of these plans are negligible.

I encourage the Board to abandon these ecologically intrusive and economically unstable alternatives. I appreciate the Board's willingness to consider my comments and should you have any further questions please contact my Chico office at 530-879-7424.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Nielsen".

JIM NIESEN,  
Senator, 4<sup>th</sup> District