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Peter Barnes, Engineering Geologist
State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Rights, Water Quality Certification Program
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

STATE WATER RESOURCES
CONTROL BOARD

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DIV OF WATER RIGHTS
SACRAMENTO

Dear Mr. Barnes,

I am writing concerning the proposal from the State Water Resources Control Board regarding Lake Almanor and potential diversions of cold water in an attempt to lower water temperatures downstream in the Feather River.

First of all, I am a Native Californian. I have enjoyed hiking, fishing and camping in the mountains of California since I was a kid. I have been enjoying the California outdoors for over 54 years. Over the years I have fished many of the lakes and streams throughout California, including many in the Sierras. For the past several years we have spent the summer months exclusively at Lake Almanor, staying at a resort in Prattville. I consider Lake Almanor to be "THE" outstanding trout fishery currently in California. (Some would argue it is one of the best fisheries in the Western United States.) Brown trout commonly reach 6 pounds in just a few years. Currently many are being caught much larger than this. The planted rainbow trout also quickly gain size and weight and provide a quality fishing experience. The baitfish population in this lake along with the water temperatures provide excellent conditions for the growth and activity of the trout species in this lake. The planted trout quickly adapt to the food sources and become "almost native-like" in their wariness and feeding choices. These fish are not caught on power-bait like most of the other lakes in California with stocked trout. Similarly, this lake also supports excellent fisheries for smallmouth bass and landlocked King Salmon. It is the same baitfish populations and water temperature conditions that help make Lake Almanor such an excellent overall fishery for ALL of these fish species. There aren't any other lakes in California currently that can compete with the size and number of fish available to fisherman than Lake Almanor.

The excellent fishery is what attracts anglers from all over the West to come to Lake Almanor so that they can fish, boat and otherwise enjoy the lake and its surroundings. This in turn supports the local economy of not just Chester, but also other local communities in Plumas and Lassen counties. This lake (in its current condition) brings in millions of dollars annually to the economy of this region. Many local families depend on the fishing and eco-tourism associated with the lake so that they can earn a living.

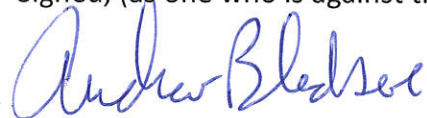
I am strongly opposed to the plans to divert any cold water from Lake Almanor! The fishery here needs it! I know, from fishing the lake in the summertime, that most of the trout are caught only at the very bottom depths of the lake, where the water is the coldest. If you take away ANY of this water, it will negatively impact the fishery. This in turn would eventually ruin the entire fishery. You do not even have information about how changes in the water temperature will affect the baitfish populations needed to sustain the trout, salmon and bass.

I believe the recommendations from the State Water board in the draft EIR are completely without merit. Any diversions of cold water will potentially ruin Lake Almanor (as a fishery, but also the local economy)! This may be the result, without ANY guarantee that the downstream temperatures will be reduced to the desired range!

This is a HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT impact to the ecology of Lake Almanor! There is NO Way to mitigate this! There is no cold water being brought into Lake Almanor to replace what is being diverted! This is a TERRIBLE and potentially disastrous proposal! The financial and ecological costs for this proposed project are tremendous when compared to the marginal benefit that might be achieved downstream. This is a poor deal for all involved. This plan must be abandoned! No further removals of cold water from Lake Almanor.

In closing, I strongly oppose ANY diversion of cold water from Lake Almanor, whether it is achieved with or without the use of "thermal curtains".

Signed, (as one who is against the destruction of Lake Almanor)



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