



July 27, 2018

The Honorable Felicia Marcus, Chair  
Jeanine Townsend, Clerk of the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street, 24th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Flow Requirements on Lower San Joaquin River**

Dear Chair Marcus and Members of the Board:

Dairy Cares (Cares)<sup>1</sup> strongly opposes the Proposed Final Amendments and Final Substitute Environmental Document for the Lower San Joaquin River Flow Objectives. Cares is deeply concerned with the catastrophic impacts this water quality plan update could have on our members and the entire economy of the San Joaquin Valley. Our concern is based on the Board's singular focus on a flow-only approach to solving the Delta crisis. Cares urges the Board to reject the proposed amendments and instead direct its staff to engage impacted stakeholders throughout the affected region in a more rigorous effort towards voluntary settlement agreements that more appropriately balance human and wildlife objectives.

It is troubling that the Board continues to focus on "unimpaired flows" as a panacea for an abundantly complex issue. Instead, the Board should be working collaboratively with other State and Federal agencies that likewise manage the resources of our state to formulate a comprehensive, ecosystem-wide solution. For example, while the July 6, 2018 update did include additional discussion of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, the proposed amendment continues to work in direct conflict with the implementation of that historic groundwater management legislation.

While Cares appreciates the Board's efforts to take thousands of oral and written comments, the "final" amendment did little to incorporate or consider the expertise of local water agencies and those who have studied this region for decades. Cares continues to be concerned with the extensive economic impact this amendment could have on the San Joaquin Valley, which we believe continues to be grossly underestimated by the Board and their staff.

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<sup>1</sup> Dairy Cares represents the environmental interests of the California dairy industry, including leading producer organizations, dairy cooperatives, and dairy processors.

Based on these concerns, Cares asks the Board to reject adoption of this version of the water quality control plan update and instead incorporate the following tactics:

- A more targeted “functional flow” approach where flows specifically support fish and wildlife, but in a more water efficient and practical manner than unimpaired flow.
- “Non-flow” measures such as habitat and floodplain restoration to improve food web production and habitat for fish, birds, and other terrestrial and aquatic species.
- Recognize that the Central Valley is a significantly altered ecosystem with many stressors, including non-native and invasive species. Any efforts to promote and protect specific native species must also address these significant stressors. This will require cooperation and collaboration across both State and Federal agencies to press those respective agencies to take actions that support the recovery of native species by supporting reduction in predator non-native species. This includes aquatic weed control and invasive noxious plants that interfere with native species.

We recognize the tremendous amount of work the Board has already put into this plan; however, Cares regrettably must oppose the plan in its current form. We implore the Board to continue working on this important issue with impacted stakeholders until a more comprehensive solution for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta can be formulated. A less economically damaging alternative pathway exists to achieve the fish and wildlife restoration goals we all share, and it must be pursued.

Respectfully,



Michael Boccadoro  
Executive Director

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**From:** Maddie Dunlap <mdunlap@westcoastadvisors.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 27, 2018 11:43 AM  
**To:** LSJR-SD-Comments@waterboards.ca.gov; WQCP1Comments  
**Cc:** Michael Boccadoro; Jennifer Bingham  
**Subject:** Dairy Cares Comments  
**Attachments:** Dairy Cares Comments\_LSJR Flows.pdf

Please see the attached comment letter on behalf of Dairy Cares.

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