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Date: June 18, 2016 at 2:16:14 PM PDT
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Subject: Open Letter to STate Water Resoruces Control Board



An Open Letter to the State Water Resources Control Board

Dear Board Members:

This is not merely a comment on your staff's preliminary recommendation regarding Cal Am's proposal to modify your cease-and-desist order (Order WR 2009-0060 or "CDO"). It is a cry for help.

Your staff is recommending shifting the blame from Cal Am to ratepayers for not meeting water-supply milestones. The recommendation is to punish ratepayers with water cutbacks instead of punishing Cal Am with a fine. That is at least partly because our local regional water authority and water management district are representing Cal Am instead of us.

We residential ratepayers now realize more than ever that we must act in our own behalf. No one else is representing us. Our recent election was a good start, but we have much more to do if the exponentially rising cost and diminishing supply of water are not going to drive too many of our fellow residents out of town and kill our local daily newspaper, as well as other local businesses like theaters and restaurants that depend on discretionary income.

Yes, steelhead trout are important, but so are people, and the Carmel River is not the only local river where trout are threatened. Once, the Salinas River had counts of over 25,000 trout; in 2015, it had none. Why is your board at least not equally concerned with the Salinas River, to say nothing of our local residents? I realize that riparian fish, and not people, are your statutory concern, but you

must realize that people, too, are a part of our environment. We need balance. Our Monterey Peninsula water crisis cries out for balance.

Obviously, your existing threat to fine Cal Am for non-compliance has not worked. That is likely because Cal Am believes it can recover from ratepayers any fine you might impose upon it. If, in fact, you truly seek to motivate Cal Am to cease over-pumping the Carmel River, then surely punishment of ratepayers instead of Cal Am would be even less likely to lead to that result.

Perhaps, the only way you can be sure you meet your statutory goals is to take Cal Am into receivership for persisting and pernicious non-compliance and to have a publicly-owned utility like the Marina Coast Water District operate the company with the single-minded goal of compliance with your CDO. If past is prelude, then that may be your only realistic option. Whatever you do, please do not punish ratepayers for Cal Am's misdeeds. It would be counterproductive and unconscionable.

Most respectfully,

Ron Weitzman

President, Water Ratepayers Association of the Monterey Peninsula (Water Plus)