

## Responses to Comments DOs and DON'Ts

### DO

Read the comment until you understand the question or issue. If you find yourself making assumptions about what the comment is saying, get a second opinion. If the comment is truly ambiguous, restate your understanding of the commenter's intent before presenting your response.

Quote the comment directly and fully in the RTC document. Don't paraphrase if you can help it.

Avoid jargon in your response. Remember that your primary audience is the non-technical public, the non-technical judge – and most important, non-technical members of the Water Board.

State your point and orientation toward the comment, and *then* elaborate. Explain fully, but be as brief as you can.

Stick to the facts of the project. Refer to statements in the project documents. If you use other information to back up your response to the comment, cite your sources and include a reference list at the end of the RTC document. (These references will be included in your admin record reference list.)

Use first person "we" where it seems appropriate to refer to staff. Use interchangeably with third person "staff."

Rather than restating a response, refer back to a previous similar response

Consider requests for changes to text and be open to making those changes.

Document and reproduce the changes you make to text, noting document and section and showing the change in ~~strike-out~~/underline in the response.

Be assertive.

Take the opportunity to correct typos or mistakes. Include significant corrections in the "Staff-Initiated Changes" section of the RTC document.

### DON'T

Do not use second person "you." You are not writing to the commenter. You are writing to the Board.

Try not to build toward your response. Make your point, and then elaborate, make your case.

Don't refer forward in the document.

Do not respond by saying "comment noted." This is considered under CEQA to be an inadequate response.

Do not take a defensive tone in responding to comments. They're not personal!

Do not apologize.

If the comment rambles, don't ramble back!

