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Mr. Scott Couch
State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Financial Assistance
1001 I Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

May 12, 2008

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SWRCB-DFA KO

RE: Prop. 50 Round 2, Step 2 draft funding recommendations

Dear Mr. Couch,

As a recipient of Prop 50 and other SWRCB funds, we are grateful to your agency for all the support directed to our organization over the years.

As a project proponent in the North Coast IRWMP application for Prop 50 Round 2 funding, I am writing to express our concern with the draft funding recommendations released by SWRCB and DWR earlier this month.

Our primary concern is the apparent disconnect between proposal scoring and recommended funding level. The North Coast application, of which we are a part, received the highest score in the proposal evaluation process by a significant margin, and yet has a funding recommendation between zero and less that 50% of the requested amount.

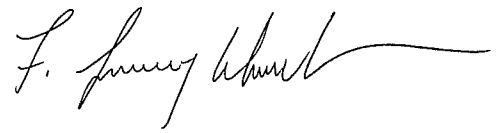
We understand there is a mandate for Prop 50 funds to be allocated between the Northern and Southern regions of the state. However, the Integrated Coastal Watershed Management Plan (ICWMP) projects have an over-arching significance that has been acknowledged by the State. Furthermore, if this allocation mandate or other factors barred the agencies from fully funding Round 2 proposals from the North, we needed to know that *before* devoting hundreds of hours of staff time to developing our proposal.

In a dramatic move at the SWRCB meeting of March 20, 2007, staff reversed its published recommendation that $30.8 million in remaining Round 2 funds be allocated to Integrated Coastal Watershed Management Plan implementations. After hearing public comments in support of ICWMP implementation, the Board indicated in public session that the ICWMPs would still be eligible for Round 2 funding. Later discussions between SWRCB / DWR and the North Coast IRWMP staff revealed that something in the range of $5 million for North Coast ICWMPs in the Round 2 cycle would be feasible, and the North Coast proceeded to put great effort into developing a proposal.

Had our proposal lacked in merit, we could better understand a reduced funding recommendation. With the proposed funding level at odds with our proposal's top ranking, we are left to assume that political pressure threatens to trump the ranking process. We would prefer to believe that our government will, upon reflection, choose to allocate public funds based on its own system for determining the merit of the proposals before it.

We urge SWRCB and DWR to revise the draft funding recommendations to award as much of the requested $5.53 million to the County of Humboldt as possible.

Sincerely,



F. Jeremy Wheeler
Mattole Restoration Council
Executive Director

Cc: Tracie Billington
Jimmy Smith