



P.O. Box 1267, Hanford, California 93232

P : 866.975.2533

www.CaliforniaWaterAlliance.org

February 13, 2015

VIA EMAIL

Honorable Felicia Marcus
Chair
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 "I" Street, 26th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Temporary Urgency Change Petition – Department of Water Resources and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Dear Madame Chair:

On behalf of the California Water Alliance – representing more than 3,000 California water users, including urban residents, businesses, farmers and the environment – I am writing to express our deep disappointment with the decision of Executive Director, Tom Howard, to deny the export provision put forth in the recent Temporary Urgency Change Petition (TUCP) by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the California Department of Water Resources.

The TUCP provides operational agencies, in conjunction with the Federal and State Fish Agencies, the operational flexibility to maximize water management during the specific months of February and March 2015. Such a balanced effort and collaboration among State and Federal agencies is crucially needed as the entire state enters a fourth year of record drought as recognized by Governor Brown's 2014 drought declaration. We request that the State of California, the State Water Resource Control Board and Mr. Howard immediately reconsider and reverse the denial in light of the support for the TUCP provided by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Mr. Howard's unilateral action is alarming in its callous nature and lack of regard for procedure. As some communities face their sixth month without running water, Mr. Howard's blatant contempt for expert scientific recommendations from independent government agencies prior to the public comment period is irresponsible and harmful to millions of California water users.

His contention, based on the "potential" for future need, lacks any empirical evidence to support his actions. Furthermore, his approach raises serious concerns about the SWRCB; undermines its structural integrity; disrespects its relationship with Federal agencies; and ignores its ability to fulfill its mission: *"To preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use, for the benefit of present and future generations."*

There is no denying the incredible toll our historic drought has taken on Californians from small rural communities and major metropolitan areas, as well as on hundreds of thousands of acres of productive farmland and vast expanses of precious environmental landscapes.

As President Barack Obama pronounced in 2014, the continued statewide drought conditions in California are a security, health, safety and social equity issue for all Americans. Securing a reliable, clean water supply to the state's communities – urban, agrarian, and environmental – is only achieved when reservoirs north and south of the Delta are recovered by allowing water transfers from north to south. The only way to accomplish this is to provide flow management flexibility for environmental health, drought recovery and protection and groundwater aquifer recharge. Without now securing the ability to safely move water throughout the state, each storm that passes and snowmelt occurrence is a lost opportunity to recover from this disaster.

In light of the scientific evidence provided by the Department of Water Resources, Bureau of Reclamation and the various Wildlife Agencies, we respectfully request that the SWRCB immediately reverse its February 3rd denial of the TUCP water supply provision and adhere to the recommendation to provide operational flexibility and water supplies to millions throughout the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aubrey J. D. Bettencourt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a white rectangular background behind it.

Aubrey J. D. Bettencourt
Executive Director
California Water Alliance