
Subject:

FW: Considerations for the Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan

From: bethany facendini [<mailto:bfacendini@gmail.com>]**Sent:** Saturday, December 14, 2013 10:28 AM**To:** commentletters**Subject:** Considerations for the Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan

Dear Chair Felicia Marcus and State Water Board,

I am writing you today to address my concerns and recommendations for the Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan update. I strongly urge you to consider not only the environmental, economic, and cultural impacts of your decisions around the future state of the Bay Delta waterways, but the ethical responsibilities that you have to protect this highly significant ecosystem from further peril. Your constituency is counting on you to advocate for a plan from an “upstream” perspective; the choices that you make today will have long-term effects for the future health of the Bay Delta and beyond.

The Bay Delta, the West Coast’s largest estuary, is a sensitive ecological system that has already been compromised. You have an opportunity to protect it. The health of the Bay Delta and its tributaries directly impacts us and over 500 wildlife species, many of which are listed as endangered, threatened, or species of special concern. Low river flows cause a myriad of water quality issues like higher concentration of pollutants and salinity levels, and impede fish passage. Commercial salmon fishing is the livelihood for thousands of Californians, and it is on the brink due to historically low salmon populations. The natural systems of the Bay Delta are deeply intertwined with economic and health outcomes of many Californians. **By committing to at least half of the San Joaquin River’s natural flow for the first six months of the year, you would be sending a clear message that you support: maintaining fish and wildlife populations; water quality; economic security; recreational opportunities; and preserving the region’s cultural heritage.** There is too much at stake for you not to make this decision.

The solutions for agricultural water needs are simple. Water use efficiency systems, practices, and policies need to be developed and implemented to ensure better management of this precious resource. The current large-scale agricultural practices are not sustainable; modifying this plan to condone high water usage for low value crops only exacerbates the problem for the future.

I am depending on your leadership to protect the Bay Delta and its tributaries not only for today, but also for tomorrow. Your constituency has empowered you to improve the Bay Delta Water Quality Plan. Please stand by your commitment to strong requirements for unimpaired flows of the Bay Delta. As author Terry Tempest Williams wisely stated, "It is no longer the survival of the fittest but the survival of compassion."

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of my recommendations.

Sincerely,

Bethany Facendini

Sebastopol, California