



State Water Resources Control Board California WaterFix Hearing – Part IB

Opening Statement of American River Water Agencies Managers

We represent the public water suppliers who form the American River Water Agencies group. Specifically, we are:

- Shauna Lorange of San Juan Water District;
- Einar Maisch of Placer County Water Agency;
- William Busath of the City of Sacramento;
- Michael Peterson of Sacramento County Water Agency;
- Rich Plecker of the City of Roseville;
- Rob Roscoe of Sacramento Suburban Water District; and
- Marcus Yasutake of the City of Folsom.

Collectively, our agencies provide the water supply for over one million people in Placer and Sacramento Counties, as well as the State Capitol and the California Environmental Protection Agency building. Our agencies hold some of the oldest water rights in the state, some of which date from the 1850s. A number of our agencies hold settlement contracts with the United States that allowed Folsom Dam and Reservoir to be built. Other agencies in our group are within the classes of local water users that the State Water Rights Board sought to protect when, in 1958, it approved the water-right permits for Folsom Dam and Reservoirs in its Decision 893. All of our agencies are within the area of origin.

As the State Board is well aware, the recent drought has demonstrated that the water supply for our region faces distinct vulnerabilities. Whether we divert our supplies directly from Folsom Reservoir or downstream with water released from the reservoir, we are dependent on the Bureau of Reclamation's operation of that reservoir. As you know, in 2014 and 2015, Folsom Reservoir was drawn down to points not seen before, with the

reservoir reaching its all-time low in early December 2015. In particular, during the very dry winter of 2013 and 2014, we learned through experience the risks that can be created when releases from the reservoir do not adequately account for the possibility of a dry winter. During 2013, California's water system essentially operated based on the assumption that there would be a normal level of precipitation in the following winter. When that precipitation did not arrive, we discovered around Christmas 2013 that there soon might not be enough water in Folsom Reservoir to serve even our residents' public health and safety level of need.

We appreciated Reclamation's efforts to work with us during the drought to attempt to ensure that our agencies had enough water to serve our communities. Those measures included installing an emergency floating pump station in the reservoir, developing plans to divert from an emergency release valve and attempting to maintain river levels at points where diversion pumps would not cavitate. Ultimately, however, these measures were untested and would have met, at best, only a portion of our needs and possibly only public health and safety levels of demand if the reservoir's level were to have dropped below the intake built into Folsom Dam.

We are here to ensure that the California WaterFix does not make this situation worse and that the Bureau of Reclamation and the Department of Water Resources implement appropriate measures to safeguard our water supplies. The fundamental purpose of California WaterFix is to make it easier to export Sacramento River water from the Delta. Some of that water could come from additional releases from upstream reservoirs like Folsom Reservoir. In essence, the California WaterFix would encourage higher releases from Folsom Reservoir to support Delta exports in some years that might end in a very dry winter. If those higher releases were to leave Folsom Reservoir too low before a very dry winter, it is our agencies and the people we serve who would be injured.

To date, DWR and Reclamation have not presented proposed terms and conditions to ensure that their operation of California WaterFix will not result in export of water from Folsom Reservoir in amounts that risk availability of our agencies' water supplies in very dry years. Instead, they rely primarily on hydrologic modeling. That modeling begins with the assumption that, even without California WaterFix, Folsom Reservoir often would be drawn down to levels that would present a real-world water-supply crisis for our agencies. Any modeling that assumes such a disaster as its "no action alternative" cannot support the conclusion that increasing the efficiency with which Folsom Reservoir can be drawn down – as the California WaterFix could – would be consistent with protecting our agencies' and

communities' water supplies. DWR and Reclamation have said that, in very dry conditions, they would implement real-time operations similar to how they operated in 2014 and 2015. Unfortunately, our experience shows that these statements do not provide the assurances that our agencies and communities need.

In this Part IB of this hearing, we will present evidence about how implementation of California WaterFix could impact our agencies' water supplies. We will present information about the potential impacts to water deliveries in dry years associated with inadequate carryover storage levels. We will also present information regarding potential impacts to water diversion facilities associated with implementation of California WaterFix and operation of the proposed North Delta intakes. We will discuss potential impacts to groundwater supplies and Sacramento area conjunctive use investments.

During the rebuttal phase of this hearing, we anticipate that we may present a proposal that would provide a level of protection to local water supplies and the environment of the lower American River, which is the only urban river designated under the federal and state Wild and Scenic Rivers Acts. Through the Water Forum, we have worked hard with our environmental partners to implement the co-equal objectives of ensuring a stable water supply for our region and protecting the lower American River's environment. Our efforts in this hearing are a continuation of that work.

We urge you to take the necessary steps to protect Folsom Reservoir storage and American River water supplies as you consider this petition.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our concerns in this hearing.

Shauna Lorance
General Manager
San Juan Water District

Rich Plecker
Environmental Utilities Director
City of Roseville

Einar Maisch
General Manager
Placer County Water Agency

Rob Roscoe
General Manager
Sacramento Suburban Water District

William O. Busath
Director, Department of Utilities
City of Sacramento

Marcus Yasutake
Environmental and Water Resources
Director
City of Folsom

Michael Peterson
Director, Department of Water Resources
Sacramento County Water Agency