Westside Produce

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June 8, 2015

State Water Resources Control Board
Chairwoman Felicia Marcus, and all Board Members
P.O. Box 100, Sacramento, CA 95812
Fax: 916-341-5620

RE: Sacramento River Temperature Plan

Dear Ms. Marcus:

2015 has proven to be another difficult year for all of California's water needs. In response to these challenges, the state and federal operational managers, along with the state and federal fish biologists, engaged with the water user community to carefully craft a Temperature Management Plan. This plan provided security for the needs of endangered fish species while also providing a certain amount of water to benefit communities, refuges and agriculture. This plan has now been rescinded as it has been discovered that there was an error with temperature readings at Shasta.

Now as alternatives are being developed via the consultation between Reclamation and the fish agencies, the water user community has been excluded from these discussions. The alternatives that will be presented to the SWRCB should have some input from the water user districts and agencies. We need to continue with a balanced approach to this very difficult situation.

The original plan provided just enough water for export that made possible a number of very creative water swaps and transfers that benefitted millions of people and millions of acres of productive farmland. All those plans now hang in the balance. If releases from storage are slightly reduced it will have devastating consequences and the ripple effect on water users will be significant. While the outcome for fish is not certain, the outcome for farmers, communities and refuges is.

Decisions on my farm were made based on the small amount of exports that were planned through the summer. I have planted my crops and made a substantial investment in them already. Should water be cut I will have no way to finish their production and will have to walk away from them. The impact on my farm and employees will be significant, but our suppliers, processors, local businesses, financial institutions, port workers, transportation workers and others who rely on agricultural products produced in this state, will also be greatly impacted. Consumers will also see prices increase and may have to rely on imported produce that is not produced with the high level of environmental and ethical standards that we have here in California.

I understand the responsibility that the Board feels toward the protection of the Sacramento winter-run salmon, but given that the temperature plan is not viable in the current situation and there is unfortunately simply insufficient cold water to accomplish the temperature objectives, we are hopeful that the Board will adopt a new plan that provides available temperature benefits and maximizes physical solutions in order to protect salmon, while maintaining the vital summer deliveries promised by the earlier adopted plans.

Very Truly Yours;

Stephen F. Patricio
President & CEO

cc: Jeanine Townsend, Clerk of the Board: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ALL STATE WATER RESOURCE CONTROL BOARD MEMBERS: Jeanine.townsend@waterboards.ca.gov
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