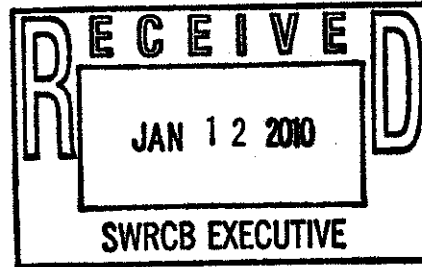


January 12, 2010

Chairman Charles Hoppin
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100



Re: Russian River Frost Protection Draft Regulation for the January 19th SWRCB Workshop

Dear Chairman Hoppin and Board Members,

Over the past 50 years, we have watched the decline of the fishery resource as a result of human activities. During that time, concern over this decline has resulted in attempts to address and reverse it. Most of this has been in the form of new laws and regulations. While this is necessary, it is not sufficient. If it were, we would have seen a reversal of the decline, which we have not.

Much time, money and energy have been spent in battles between groups, each seeking to push the regulations to favor their interests. No visible improvement of the fishery has resulted. While you may find the course of additional regulation familiar, you must consider whether it is the proper course.

Real benefit to our land and water resources comes from sound management of individual properties, managed within a comprehensive framework of coordination with others to achieve common goals. You have the opportunity to support and encourage this, or to remain caught in the 'more regulation is better' mode.

There is an alternative. The Russian River Frost Program (RRFP) is that alternative. In its short existence, it has made more progress towards resolving the issues of immediate concern than any other group or agency. As it focuses on bringing all the water users in this watershed together to better manage water use for the benefit of all life that depends on it, it is creating a new way to bring about positive change. As our economy struggles, as our environmental pressures grow, we cannot afford the luxury of indulging in wasteful conflict at the expense of productive cooperation.

What can you do to make a positive contribution?

First, decide that you want to. Take the risk of doing something different, leaving the safety of the familiar. Have faith in people and their honest desire to do their best.

Second, send the draft back to staff.

Finally, instruct staff to return with a proposal that supports the efforts underway by the RRFP rather than obstructs them. Victoria Whitney reported to the task force that her staff was excited to be working creatively on ways to facilitate positive changes. This energy needs to be fueled by giving them the directive to "make it so." We can identify what needs to be done in each situation. They can find the most efficient way to make it possible to do so within the existing regulatory framework. My personal experience in working on modifications to my water right demonstrated how effective that can be.

I understand your concern about the nay sayers, non participants and freeloaders. If even half the people join together to make positive changes, and are assisted by your agency and others, that is half the job done right there. For the other half, the example of our successes will draw many of them in as they feel safe to engage with agencies historically perceived as hostile. For the remainder, existing laws, vigorously enforced and targeted at those individuals, will take care of the rest.

You have the power to help or hinder. Let's not try to solve 21st century problems with 20th century strategies. Now is the time to make a difference.

Sincerely,

Alfred White
La Ribera Vineyards
Ukiah, CA