



The EcoMedia Compass

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Dear California State Water Board,

Thank you for your involvement in contributing to a healthy future for our State and region. My name is Kerry F. Morrison, and I am the Founder and Director of The EcoMedia Compass, a non-profit organization, working closely with the local communities on awareness and education for the Salton Sea. In addition to many progressive events, we have a large, and active social media collective, and have spurred numerous media pieces about the Salton Sea worldwide. Our office, Save Our Sea! Headquarters is open to the public and based in Salton City.

More than ever before, the Salton Sea needs our help in cooperation and collaboration of wills and resources. The proposed QSA deadline at the end of 2017 is growing nearer every day, while the shoreline continues to recede. As we speak, the water of the greater Salton Sea is getting saltier. For tens of millions of fish and about 425 bird species, this IS the tipping point. Without immediate collaborative action, we will lose most of what makes this large portion of Southern California, truly amazing. We could lose so much life.

Many of us have come to understand how much potential the Salton Sea really has. From its tourist-filled glory days, we see tremendous tourism, home and job potential on the close-to 100 miles of breathtaking shoreline. This region truly can be one of the most promising places in our country for the way we plan our futures. The best solution will be a collaboration of different plans, working together on the points that each stakeholder is best at. Some agencies are better than others at habitat, renewables, recreation, mitigation and innovative new technologies. Many of these proposed ideas can be quite complementary.

Unfortunately through the past, we have seen many disagreements on how the Salton Sea should actually be “restored”. We understand that it is necessary to manage expectations for what the region can look like, but that does not mean to stop thinking big. This can be a great success story. Environmental, health, economic and renewable resource-based action needs to answer five main points:

- 1. NO more dust should be allowed to leave the playa.** It works best wet. Underwater, toxic heavy metals have had very little or no effects on the environment. The water quality is actually much better than most people think. Salton Sea playa has chemicals that WILL make us sick, upon becoming airborne and I know many who are suffering from those medical effects. Moving forward, this region cannot afford any more fugitive dust.
- 2. Maintain shoreline habitat at or near current levels.** Currently the Salton Sea provides tens of thousands of acres of habitat that helps make up for the 95% of wetlands we have lost in the State. These can be expanded to cover playa, while fostering life.
- 3. Expand renewable energy resources for a sustainable future that mandates a significant portion of profits toward habitat and restoration efforts.** With geothermal we see a resource that, if managed very carefully on the San Andreas Fault line, can provide tremendous amounts of clean power for our future generations. We have clean industries in algae and biofuel cultivation, in-line hydro options, water filtration, salt and chemical extraction, solar and wind. Let us encourage public-private partnerships and investments.
- 4. Shoreline cities, properties and park regions should have access to some clean, recreational water and aesthetic beauty.** That’s why this region was at one time, so successful and it can be again. With some investment, prepare for an economic BOOM.
- 5. A long-term vision to keep this region sustainable for generations.** Continuing to split up the lake and transfer water away without having a different source or at least healthy habitat and mitigation lined up, is absolutely irresponsible. Owens Lake was not a great success story, and this is three times bigger. The land owners in between the Sea of Cortez and the Salton Sea are supportive of importing water downhill to the border and the Salton Sea, as it’s flow greatly benefits their farming, fishing, tourism and healthy economies as well. Strongly consider dust mitigation, habitat and recreation possibilities of ocean import water.

Every day, I hear of projects that will greatly benefit the region, at or near shovel-ready status. An encouraging move from the State, including appropriate allocation of Prop 1 money and more, to also live up to QSA restoration obligations, will signal a boom of help, investment and faith from the private sector. But these first, big steps must be taken from our governmental bodies.

There must be significant investment now.

It's time to show the people that our government truly cares for our future.

Sincerely,

Kerry F. Morrison
Executive Director
The EcoMedia Compass

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