

**From:** me  
**To:** [commentletters](#)  
**Subject:** Comment Letter – 2016 Bay Delta Plan Amendment & SED  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 15, 2017 1:11:22 PM



To:  
Jeanine Townsend  
State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)  
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From:  
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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2016 Bay Delta Plan Amendment & SED.

I am a California native and life long angler, mostly for trout. I have fished most of the waters of California that hold trout and other salmonids and as a result have learned about California's phenomenal and almost forgotten salmonid legacy. As I'm sure you all know, California's central valley was once home to one of the greatest salmonid fisheries in the world that has been squandered because of past water management mistakes.

I have also been fortunate to fish for trout, salmon, and steelhead all around the USA and the world and have had many encounters with knowledgeable trout and salmonid lovers with one basic reaction: "What are you doing here when you live in the holy land of trout and why don't you take better care of your fish?" After shaking their head in disappointment, most of them speak with a wistful glint in their eye of their bucket list dream to fish for trout in California's hallowed waters, even knowing they have been decimated. By the way, that's proven economic value talking, too. In response, I have little choice but to admit shame and muster a shred of pride since I have spent most of my life trying to save California's unique natural wonders.

The fact is, California has systematically and with great and full awareness destroyed a true wonder of the world, the central valley salmonid fishery. The mis-allocation of water in California is only one thing: a shameful and willful act of waste and negligence. It must stop now.

I have been told by industrial agricultural experts that they know how to farm productively and profitably with vastly less water and routinely do so elsewhere, but they have no incentive to do so in California, so they don't. The "fish vs. farms and jobs" dichotomy is false and must be rejected: careful and innovative management of agricultural water creates more, not fewer jobs. Farmers know that and so do you.

The SWRCB has before it the opportunity to take a significant and absolutely necessary step in the right direction. Let's save our unique and irreplaceable natural wonders first and learn to live well with what's left. As challenging as this may be, it is, by definition, the only way to a sustainable water future for the central valley and California.

Scientific consensus holds that a minimum of 60 percent unimpaired flow is required to recover salmon and steelhead runs in the San Joaquin River system to self-sustaining levels. The water board must objectively consider the wide-ranging benefits that all Californians receive from healthy fisheries and river ecosystems, as well as the specific requirements of fisheries and anglers. It must consider the wide-ranging benefits that all Californians receive from healthy fisheries and river ecosystems. Significant opportunities exist to meet enhanced water quality standards and to save salmon from extinction in California, with minimal impact to the agricultural sector. These opportunities must be fully considered and supported by new policy.

California has already tried alternatives favored by large water users to save salmon and steelhead, and these have failed. Dedication of more water, delivered at key times, must be the primary tactic for recovering fisheries and the Bay-Delta's ecosystem. Central Valley salmon and steelhead runs are on the brink of extinction. We can no longer

afford to experiment with strategies that don't include more water.

Thank you for considering my comments. I trust you will make the decisions that will result in the continued fulfillment of California's destiny as a leader in all things, now to include your courageous wisdom to recover our natural legacy and create an economic environment of long overdue agricultural innovation and truly sustainable abundance for California and the world that admires and relies on us. I look forward to that and hope you do, too.

Truly yours,

Peter A. Burnes