

**From:** Vanessa Warheit  
**To:** [commentletters](#)  
**Subject:** Comment Letter – 2016 Bay Delta Plan Amendment & SED  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 15, 2017 10:25:14 AM

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Jeanine Townsend, Clerk of the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street, 24th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814-0100



Dear State Water Resources Board,

My name is Vanessa Warheit, and I am a lifelong San Francisco Bay Area resident. I have become increasingly aware of the many threats to the Bay that I love - from the marshes that protect our coastlines to the fish that form the basis of our ecosystems to the birds that still amaze me with their majesty as they fill the Delta flyways. I am writing today to urge you to allow more water to flow into the Bay, to keep it safe and strong for generations to come.

Science tells us that at least half of the natural flow from the Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Merced and lower San Joaquin Rivers should make it to the Bay-Delta. Approximately 60% of unimpaired flow is needed in the lower San Joaquin River and its three major tributaries between February and June to protect fish and wildlife. Surely, it is more than fair for our single species to take "only" 40% of that flow? Yet I was horrified to learn that, on average, we are taking more than HALF: less than 50% of the freshwater flow from the Central Valley reaches the Bay, and in some years less than 35%. Not only is this unfair to other species - it is stupid and self-destructive. Humans do not stand apart from nature; we depend on it.

We are effectively starving our Bay and Delta. Reduced freshwater inflow has changed the chemistry of the Delta, encouraging blue-green algae that produces neurotoxins - making people sick and killing plankton and wildlife. Why would we do this to ourselves?

Salmon are a keystone species, providing food for us and other animals and transporting nutrients from the ocean to upland habitats. They are the foundation of an entire ecosystem - of which we are a part. They are also essential to the commercial fishing industry. Yet their numbers have been reduced by over 90%. To protect our salmon, river flows need to inundate floodplains, which serve as critical habitat for juvenile salmon and other fish. Yet we have been depriving these floodplains of the water they need.

There is no reason why we must continue this kind of destructive behavior. Through better management of snowmelt, through using efficient irrigation technologies and practices, and by replacing lower-value, water-intensive crops with higher-value, water-efficient crops, we could grow more food with less water. I have personally seen - during the height of the drought, no less! - fields still being irrigated by sprinklers. This is madness. Today, pressurized irrigation systems make it possible to increase crop yields and radically reduce our usage, and we need to be implementing this technology on a massive scale. The next mega-drought may be right around the corner, so we need to act now.

In California, water is a public trust resource, meaning it belongs to the people of California. Let's

take back our power and demand that we leave enough water in the rivers to protect the ecosystems on which our species relies. It's time for us to make it a priority to treat water as the precious resource that it is - for us, and for the environment we all depend on.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Warheit  
Berkeley, CA

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