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Public Comment
2016 Bay-Delta Plan Amendment & SED
Deadline: 1/17/17 12:00 noon

December 17, 2016

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



Dear Ms. Townsend and Board,

The Sierra watershed is a California resource that belongs to every Californian not simply to those living upstream. California told miners, loggers, dredgers, and others we will protect our rivers, a warning you see on the following page. California has a responsibility to protect the environment while providing a stable resource for residential, industrial, and agricultural use. I am pleased to support additional flows in the San Joaquin and Sacramento River watersheds, especially now that federal legislation will provide more pumping from the delta.

We designed water policies in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries on the heels of the Little Ice Age. My grandmother grew up in the early 1900s off Henness Pass Road, the main wagon road into California north of Donner Pass that followed the ridge between the Yuba Rivers into Grass Valley and Marysville. They had at least six to eight feet of permanent winter snow where she lived near Allegany. Her "winter" door was in the gable you see in the photo of her home on page three. The Sierra rarely gets that much snow at 4,000 feet anymore.

Modern science proves the west is far drier than we thought, and it is imperative we live within our means. Farming has always been gamble, and farmers must be responsible stewards of the land with our limited water resources. California finally developed regulations to protect our aquifer that is under assault from farmers who believe they can pump unlimited water resources or greedy groundwater miners like those in northern Merced County who pumped 22,000 acre feet for sale to other water districts, a sale that harmed their neighbors. The increased water flows may help sustain and stabilize our aquifers.

I attended the October 18th Water Board update to Merced County Supervisors and was alarmed some supervisors joked we do not need to protect our environment since Alaska has all the salmon and bald eagles California needs. The presenter outlined mitigation activities we could perform in our region, and I hope the Waterboard will work with responsible, local stakeholders to develop appropriate mitigation activities. Recent federal legislation may provide funding to line primary irrigation canals with concrete and alleviate the environmental destruction gold dredgers caused when they turned millions of river bottom acres into piles of stone for millennium.

I am pleased the Water Board believes California water resources shall be managed to protect the environment while providing stable and sustainable water deliveries to residential, industrial, and agricultural users. We must live within our means in the arid west, and I am pleased to offer my support for increased river flows in the San Joaquin and Sacramento watersheds.

Sincerely,

Keith Ensminger
cc: Email and postal mail

Keith & Marisa Ensminger
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PUBLISHED
EVERY SATURDAY

PRICE 10 CTS

OFFICE:
602 CALIFORNIA ST.
NEW SAN FRANCISCO 37

San Francisco, December 4TH 1880

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BY THE PUBLISHERS OF THE WASP
P. M. W. & C. O. P. O. BOX 2100

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