



California Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, California 93710
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov>

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor
DONALD KOCH, Director



March 16, 2009

Danny McClure
Regional Water Quality Control Board
11020 Sun Center Drive, #200
Rancho Cordova, California 95670-6114

Subject: Proposed Revisions to the 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies San Joaquin, Tuolumne, Merced and Stanislaus Rivers as Impaired Bodies of Water for Temperature

Dear Mr. McClure:

As the California Regional Water Quality Board (Board) is aware, the population crash of the Chinook salmon along the Pacific coast continues to be a common subject in the news. Federal and state agencies across the Pacific Northwest currently are evaluating and discussing closing all commercial and sport fishing along the Pacific coast for the second year in a row. This has never occurred before. Significant economic loss continues in the communities and industries that depend on this natural resource.

The San Joaquin River salmon populations (adult escapement) have substantially declined since 2001; and the last two year's decline in ocean conditions only accelerated an already steady decline in adult escapement to San Joaquin River tributaries. During the fall 2006, the Merced River Fish Hatchery spawned only 76 female salmon out of a total of 150 returning fish; in 2007, 42 female were spawned from a total of 79; and in 2008, only 13 females were spawned from a total of 76 returning salmon.

As we previously stated, today, three of the four "runs" have been extirpated in the basin with only the fall-runs of salmon and small steelhead runs on the Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus Rivers remaining. The California Department of Fish and Game (Department) has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and the habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (Fish and Game Code Section 1802). The Department, as the fish and wildlife Trustee Agency, is responsible to protect and maintain these last remaining salmon and steelhead populations in the San Joaquin River Basin.

The Department continues to support the Board's efforts to list the above rivers as impaired bodies of water for temperature, pursuant to Section 303(d). If your

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staff needs any additional information, please encourage them to contact Dr. Andrew Gordus, Staff Environmental Scientist (Regional Water Quality Biologist), on my staff at the address or telephone number provided on this letterhead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dean Maustorf".

Jeffrey R. Single, Ph.D.
Regional Manager

cc: Dr Karl Longley, Board Member
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
11020 Sun Center Drive, #200
Rancho Cordova, California 95670-6114

Carl Wilcox, Water Branch
Department of Fish and Game

Tim Heyne, Central Region
Department of Fish and Game