



February 8, 2018

SENT VIA EMAIL TO TABLE 1 OF THE CURRENT SERVICE LIST

RE: Comments on SWRCB California WaterFix Petition Hearing, Part 2

Good Morning,

I am Dale Claypoole, a board member and former president of the Friends of Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. Friends of Stone Lakes is a volunteer, non-profit, non-governmental group that supports the Refuge and is separate and apart from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Stone Lakes is one of a dwindling number of areas along the Pacific flyway that continue to include wetlands, lakes and streams. As such, it provides critical habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds of international concern as well as a number of endangered plant and animal species. It also serves as an important buffer against the effects of urban encroachment into the Delta by Elk Grove and south Sacramento.

Even before the Tunnels Project, Stone Lakes was identified as one of the most threatened refuges in the entire USFWS system. Now it is “ground zero” for the impacts of the Delta Tunnels. The water intakes, tunnel shafts, intermediate forebay and the transmission lines serving them would all be within or very near to the Refuge.

It is difficult for small organizations like ours to participate in a process of this magnitude and duration. But due to our serious concerns, we have spent almost a decade working to try to minimize the impact of the tunnels on the Refuge. We support the strengthening of certain mitigation measures that has occurred over the course of the process, such as creating wetlands and providing temporary forage areas, but are concerned about whether they are enforceable and will have adequate funding.

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Many issues have yet to be adequately addressed. Construction activities and related traffic would surround and bisect the Refuge, making it unsuitable for wildlife and the public. New and modified aboveground power lines near and in the Refuge, would result in increased birdstrikes and increased mortality to Greater sandhill cranes and other birds.

It's no secret that the tunnels proponents are having difficulty securing financial backing for the project. Yesterday, it was announced that the project would be reduced to a single tunnel initially, with a second tunnel and another intake built later. The details of the new project have not been described to the public, and the State Board shouldn't consider a new project now, halfway through the Hearing.

We are concerned that with cost-cutting and project redefinition, the promised environmental commitments and mitigation will go by the wayside. Even if all of the mitigation was implemented, we are very concerned about the damage the tunnels project would do to the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and the species that depend on it for habitat.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Dale Claypoole
Member, Friends of Stone Lakes
National Wildlife Refuge

STATEMENT OF SERVICE

CALIFORNIA WATERFIX PETITION HEARING

Department of Water Resources and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Petitioners)

I hereby certify that I have this day, February 8, 2018, submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board and caused a true and correct copy of the following document:

Letter Dated February 8, 2018 from Dale Claypoole

to be served by Electronic Mail (email) upon the parties listed in Table 1 of the Current Service List for the California WaterFix Petition Hearing, dated January 24, 2018, posted by the State Water Resources Control Board at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/bay_delta/california_waterfix/service_list.shtml

I certify that the foregoing is true and correct and that this document was executed on February 8, 2018.

Signature:  _____

Name: Mae Ryan Empleo

Title: Legal Assistant for Osha R. Meserve
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Party/Affiliation:

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