

TESTIMONY OF WITNESS FOR NORTH DELTA CARES

Witness: Nicole S. Suard, Esq.
Managing Member, Snug Harbor Resorts, LLC

I, Nicole S Suard, do hereby declare:

I am a life-long fourth-generation boater in California, and first visited the North Delta, by sailboat, in 1972 as a Sea Scout with Ship 618, which participated in a rendezvous with other sea scout ships on Steamboat Slough, at Hogback Park. I visited the Delta area on houseboats and ski boats thereafter whenever possible. After completion of our respective professional education, my husband and I relocated to Northern California, and for vacations with our sons we visited almost every recreation lake in California, towing along a ski boat with us as we camped. However, our favorite location for vacation remained the Delta area, which is located only sixty minutes from our home.. We have boated to most areas of the Delta, except down by Tracy, and I am very familiar with the Delta from a water-side perspective. Starting in the early we began to look for a second home or investment opportunity in the Delta. In 1997 we purchased the current resort property, created the LLC, and began the process to upgrade old infrastructure and make additional improvements.

I have witnessed the changes to flows, water quality, water levels and terrestrial environment of the North Delta, from a waterside perspective. I have spent considerable time on waterways such as Prospect Slough and the Liberty Island reservoir area, since the flood of 1998 of that island. I have taken photos of the North Delta area, and had opportunities to ride along in a sea plane that was berthed at Snug Harbor for many years, from about 2000 to 2008. The aerial experience helped me to gain a broader understanding of the volume of water and magnitude of management issues faces by responsible government agencies. In addition, I started collecting old Delta maps and books or reports, and from that activity became aware of problems with some government agencies and media falsifying Delta history and facts.

I have managed drinking water wells since 1987, and the public drinking water wells and treatment system at the resort since 1997. We had a new drinking water well installed in 2000, and have complete records for installation and all water testing. What is important about this well is that starting around 2010 there was a severe decline in water quality, which is evidence of negative impacts to the area drinking water aquifers. Due to degradation of my primary drinking water source, I began researching the issues, and found that there were many reports that indicated a change in groundwater quality in the North Delta occurred starting at least by 2010. I believe that it can be shown that a major cause of the groundwater degradation is the many soils borings, channel bench installations, restoration sites and other actions under the CALFED/BDCP process. It is a known fact that disturbance of soils can affect shallow drinking water aquifers. In addition, due to the low flows from the Sacramento River into the Delta, and Steamboat Slough in particular, aquifer recharge did not occur, further exasperating the situation. Decline in drinking water quality of wells in the North Delta have coincided with the increase of exports from the Delta, and increase of diversions of Sacramento River water north of the Delta.

My testimony will focus on impacts to drinking water quality of wells, and surface water quality on the waterways due to low inflows to the Delta. My focus is harm to humans, as well as harm to animals, both wild and domestic, and harm to irrigation due to water quality issues. I can also present testimony relating to how loss of drinking water causes financial harm to recreational businesses, residents and farms.

I believe Waterboards should immediately reduce the amount of water allowed to be diverted from the Sacramento River in the Delta by at least 35% until such time as Delta surface water quality and also groundwater quality cooperates from the water management current régime.

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Nicole S. Suard