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10 Specially Appearing for Protestant Save Our Sandhill Cranes
 11 for Purposes of Presenting Part 2 Testimony

12 **BEFORE THE**
 13 **CALIFORNIA STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD**

14 HEARING IN THE MATTER OF
 15 CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER
 16 RESOURCES AND UNITED STATES
 17 BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
 18 REQUEST FOR A CHANGE IN POINT OF
 19 DIVERSION FOR CALIFORNIA WATER FIX

20 **TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL SAVINO**
 21 **SAVE OUR SANDHILL CRANES**

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1 **I. INTRODUCTION**

2 My name is Mike Savino. I came to California around 1957 to go to graduate school
3 where I earned a Master's Degree in Psychology. Having spent over half a century in
4 California, mostly in Sacramento, I have become increasingly enamored of its green open
5 spaces and wildlife. Since retiring in 2001, I have been able to volunteer for many
6 environmental organizations. That experience has led me to appreciate our good fortune in
7 having Sandhill cranes share our Delta habitat for much of the year.

8 **II. TESTIMONY**

9 I serve as president of Save Our Sandhill Cranes ("SOSC"). Thank you for allowing us
10 time to offer you some information to help you make your decision on this massive project that
11 could adversely affect future generations of California citizens.

12 SOSC was incorporated in California as a 501(c)(3) non-profit over 12 years ago
13 because we were concerned with the loss of the Fall and Winter California Delta habitat for our
14 Greater Sandhill Cranes, which, as you know, are listed as threatened under the California
15 Endangered Species Act. Already subject to shrinking habitat due to urbanization and
16 changes in farming, the Delta Tunnels project would cause yet more pressure on the cranes.

17 The mission of SOSC is to protect the Delta Fall and Winter habitat of our cranes by
18 advocacy, such as testifying at hearings of local, regional and state government bodies such
19 as your selves, supporting scientific research, and by conducting public education by providing
20 information at public events such as the recent 21st annual Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival and
21 the Galt Winter Bird Festival, which we helped originate over a decade ago. Although we are
22 relatively small we do have over 750 supporters.

23 Our most popular public outreach activity is to conduct free public crane viewing tours in
24 the Delta region. Over the years, we attracted literally hundreds of eco-tourists to the Delta to
25 see these iconic mega fauna. People from all over the state and beyond have participated in
26 our tours. I also lead crane viewing tours for the state Department of Fish & Wildlife ("DFW").
27 These tours also introduce hundreds of tourists to the Delta every year. Taken together the
28 DFW, Audubon and SOSC crane tours have introduced thousands of people to the Delta.

1 After we show our tour guests the way, many of them come back on their own with friends and
2 relatives so our influence is multiplied in countless ways. Many of our guests have asked us
3 for recommendations on places to stay or dine and we usually refer them to local Delta
4 restaurants or to Lodi or Galt. Thus, the cranes bring visitors and economic benefits to our
5 region.

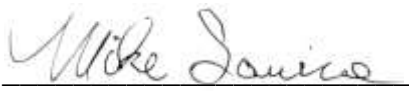
6 The Sandhill Crane Festival is our flagship event each year and attracts people from a
7 wide geographic area. Approximately 1,500 to 2,000 visitors came to the festival this year.
8 (SOSC-75.) Forty-six tours for 1,100 reserved spots were conducted. 2017 online registration
9 included people from a variety of areas: 35% from the greater Bay Area; 29% from the greater
10 Sacramento area; 11% from Stockton/Manteca/Modesto area; 11% from the greater Lodi area;
11 and another 14% from northern, coastal and southern California; plus a handful from out-of-
12 state. There were perhaps 800 individuals who participated on tours during the weekend.
13 These numbers are fairly consistent with previous years. (See SOSC-4 and SOSC-5.)

14 While you may all be familiar with the Sandhill Crane, it is worthwhile to remind
15 ourselves of what a magnificent and unusual animal this is. (See SOSC-3.) Of the hundreds
16 of species of birds in North America, the Sandhill crane is among the top half a dozen or so
17 largest birds. Standing about five feet tall with a wing span of six feet, it stands out at a
18 distance. It is revered by many cultures as a symbol of fidelity (it mates for life), longevity (it
19 lives over thirty years in the wild), and as a harbinger of good luck. Cranes appear in
20 mythology in cultures all over the world. It is one of the oldest extant bird species in the world.
21 Paleontologists have found remains of cranes from almost ten million years ago. We are truly
22 blessed to be able to share our space with this ancient, iconic animal.

23 It is difficult to estimate the positive financial impact of eco-tourism on the Delta region,
24 but we are confident it is significant and growing. The cranes would be unreasonably impacted
25 if the project was approved. Specifically how this project would diminish the crane population I
26 will leave to the testimony of my expert colleagues. I simply want to bring to your attention the
27 fact that the project would also diminish eco-tourism, which has been growing in the Delta
28 region.

1 I do not believe that the project would be in public interest, either locally or from a
2 broader perspective.

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4 Executed on the 30th day of November, 2017, at Sacramento, California.

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6 Michael Savino
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8 **REFERENCES**

9 Golden, Joe. 2017. Marsh Madness: 'Craniacs' Flock to Annual Sandhill Crane Festival.
10 RecordNet.com. [SOSC-75]
11 Greater Sandhill Crane Photos. [SOSC-3]
12 Lodi Crane Festival Brochure 2017. [SOSC-4]
13 Lodi Crane Festival Tours 2017. [SOSC-5]
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