

Table 4-1. Responses to Comments

Letter No.	Comment No.	Comment	Response
1516	1	RODRIGUEZ: All right. Good morning to the members of the Board, and thank you for allowing us to be here today. I appreciate your time. I'm here as a member of the Big Valley Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, and I am in full support of the tribes to the north that are trying to protect their way of life. I come here today as a grandmother, a mother, an auntie, a friend, and so that the -- I just want to speak a little bit on the long-standing, like, generational trauma that the tribes have experienced, and which is one of the reasons why I think that we have questions about, you know, the -- these agreements that you're talking -- the Voluntary Agreements that we're talking about today. If you look back at the historical trauma of the tribes, the land theft and the reservation system, these reservation systems left us with very little land on which to, you know, subsist off of, and I think that, you know, the salmon for the northern tribes is a really big, you know, subsistence for them, and it's -- we're not only talking about recreational, but we're talking about their survival. And as a member of the Big Valley Rancheria, it's like we have seen our own hitch put on the endangered species list. These were fish that had, that had allowed us to continue to survive in times of famine, and we have seen what the degradation of the water has done to these particular fish. The erosion, the runoff of Big Ag, dilapidated septic systems around the lake, removal of our tules. So all of this stuff has me coming here today to want to advocate and support those tribes that have just come before me, and make sure that you hear our voices and you understand that there is all of this historical trauma and lack of trust of any governmental system, whether that's the federal system, whether that's the state system, or the local county systems. You know, and I just want to be here to make -- to advocate and ask that there is some full transparency on the language that are	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		going into these agreements. Excuse me. I'm just trying to get back here to my notes, I'm sorry. RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, so, also, I'm just like, want to say that, you know, with the panel that we have here today, we have members from, like, the northern tribes, the central tribes, and the southern California tribes here as part of this presentation to be able to advocate for this --for the tribes that are just north of us. Yeah. So that's all I have. Thank you.	
1516	2	NIKCOLE WHIPPLE: (Speaks in Tongva.) My name is Nikcole Whipple, and I'm a member of the Round Valley Indian tribes. I am also a water protector and advocate with Save California Salmon, and I -- if we can go ahead and start the next slide. You know, we are here to talk about the rights of water and, you know, very thankful for all of our strong matriarchal women that are here representing our waterways, and so I, you know, shared a few slides to talk about, a little bit about how our tribal communities work. You've heard a lot of, you know, about how our tribal communities are impacted, but to be sitting amongst women and working with women like Ms. Chichizola, Morning Star is one of our Board members. We have Chief Caleen Sisk, you know, I've gotten the opportunity to work with Corrina Gould, we have Marva Jones, all of these women who are advocating and fighting for our waterways and our tribal beneficial uses. Cassiel Riley (phonetic) was, you know, very adamant about working on TBUs, and thank you for accepting those, but there clearly is a lot more work to do for those TBUs to be recognized in all of our basin plans. But you know, this -- our work that we do as women advocates, that is just, again, going back to that language. You know, we've heard over and over again about how the language and the terminology is different from the way that we actually live our lives in our matriarchal societies. You know, my connection to the Bay-Delta is -- a little bit of	The State Water Board appreciates the continuous engagement and significant advocacy from tribes and environmental justice communities throughout the Sacramento/Delta update to the Bay-Delta Plan. Please see Common Response 11.1, Tribal Engagement and Tribal Beneficial Uses, for a discussion on Tribal Beneficial Uses and the protection of Tribal Tradition and Culture (CUL) beneficial use. Please see Common Response 10.1, Economically Disadvantaged Communities, for a discussion of DAC comments on existing environmental conditions and the CEQA analysis and the State Water Board's Racial Equity Resolution and Racial Equity Action Plan.

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		history about myself -- is that as a member of the Round Valley Indian Tribes, we are part of the Nome Cult, which is the California Trail of Tears history, basically. So my grandfather made it. He's -- you know, I'm here because my grandfather was able to make it at eight years old with his grandmother from the Valley over into Round Valley. So my ancestral ties. And the way that our matriarchal societies work is that we follow our mother, our father, and our grandmothers, and my grandmother was Concow, Maidu, Nomlacki, and Wintu, and so we are connected to, you know, the areas of, you know, the Wintun tribes and the Maidu And the way that our matriarchal societies work is that we follow our mother, our father, and our grandmothers, and my grandmother was Concow, Maidu, Nomlacki, and Wintu, and so we are connected to, you know, the areas of, you know, the Wintun tribes and the Maidu tribes and the Nomlacki tribes, which all are connected to the Sacramento and the Bay-Delta, Feather River, all these river systems. And so it means a lot for me to be able to stand up and fight for the rights and for the water for our Indigenous first people. My father, my paternal side, is from Round Valley, which is a Yuki -- you know, I'm a Yuki descendant, and, you know, we are also fighting for our rights on the Eel River. Free the Eel. But, you know, we, those, that means my ancestral ties are from the Nevada border to the Pacific Ocean. But, you know, when we talk about rematriation, you know, it's us, our women, who stand up to speak on what is needed and how to protect our waterways. And, you know, I thank you for speaking out on the racial equity plan, because I've sat on many boards and many panels, and we have many allies, especially with my tribe from Round Valley, our allies are all BIPOC organizations and the caucuses. But, you know, when I do go to these places being the Indigenous first people, I'm always the minority in the BIPOC, and so I appreciate you pointing that out, because it is time for our Indigenous people to be uplifted in that BIPOC forum because that is the way that we're moving. You know, we respect and that we are all underserved in need of this rematriation and healing within our matriarchal societies. Next slide.	

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		You know, so one of the things, you know, I wear many hats, as I've already explained, but one of them is I'm also a cultural burner. I'm also, right now, I work for the Big Valley Rancheria, and I'm blessed to have met Carla and her sons. They are my -- her sons are my -- part of our fire crew, cultural fire crew, and we started our fire crews together as I went boots on the ground because it is my belief that I will not, I can't write and do policy and advocating unless I'm on the ground first. And so I went into training, and then now I work with the Big Valley Rancheria EPA department under Sarah Ryan, who I'm sure you are fully all aware of all of her great work that she has been doing in Clear Lake and in all over the state. But, you know, she is one of my mentors that I also look up to in understanding all of these processes, and if at any second I can ask her a question, and she just has all the answers, which is beautiful. But, you know, one of the things that we had got to speak on and talk about when I talk about water quality -- well, as a cultural burner, you know, it was -- I find it very important to explain, you know, Carlos spoke a little bit about Big Valley and the land theft and the land grabs. Well, that's what's happening right now. Yesterday, we heard the Solano County elected officials speak about how Clear Lake is included. Well, Clear Lake is, you know, our tribal representative -- so I reside, I am from Round Valley, Mendocino County, explained to all the other places, I reside in Lake County and work for the Big Valley Tribe under a CAL FIRE grant, which is a multi-tribal organizational grant. But in that work that I do, I've had to learn how when we talk about fighting for the hitch and the hitch passages, when we talk about the lifeway -- you know, we heard yesterday, again, the elected officials from Yolo and Solano talking about how Cache Creek is the lifeway, but they failed to recognize that that's the lifeway of the Indigenous tribal people from Elam, from Coy, from Big Valley to Middletown. Those are our historical, you know, traditional families, and they have been completely neglected and left out from these conversations, and the waterways are just completely depleted. And that is our lifeway on the lake.	

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		And so when, you know, we talk about how, again, just, you know, making my connection of -- to why it's important for -- not a Bay-Delta tribe, but our families are all connected. You know, there were conversations yesterday about fire, about the need for having more water for fire. But what's happening with the, you know, ag seems to be the priority. And, you know, I've talked, I've spoke to you before about how I feel about, like, putting two and two together as to why we are so sick, why we have all these cancers, and why is our water so bad. It's because we have all this ag runoff in our water systems. We have diversions that are keeping creating fire fuels. So when we have, you know, the people from Napa talking about how they're so fearful of having these fires and fire mitigation, you have to understand that when you deplete a riparian system, which is supposed to have riparian fire-adapted plants in it, so that you can divert it to go water ag, you're going to have problems. You're going to have fuel. You're going to have invasive species. And it's unfortunate that, again, we need to go back to talk about cultural surveys and tribal beneficial uses, because the health of the native plants is equally as important as the endangered species that are listed on the endangered species list, but those things are not recognized yet. I'm going to go ahead and pass it on so I don't take up too much time. But, you know, I brought many relatives here from the north and the south because I think it's very important that you hear from our Southern California family members on how they don't agree with the fact that it's okay to take from our Northern California families to deplete our water so that ag can survive in California. NIKCOLE WHIPPLE: Thank you. Do you want to talk on water quality or do you want to go to the next slide?	
1516	3	DAHLIN: Can we go to the next slide? Hi, everyone. Normally, I don't need a mic. Normally, I have, like, a PA system in my throat. My name is Mariah Dahlin. I am an enrolled member of the	The State Water Board appreciates the continuous engagement and significant advocacy from tribes and environmental justice communities throughout the Sacramento/Delta update to the Bay-Delta Plan.

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		Indian Apache Nations. I am Apache of the Chiricahua Band. I'm very grateful to be here. Thank you, Nikcole, for bringing me here. You know, we come here today as Native women from tribal communities across California and beyond. We're not here as representatives of any one tribe in particular. We're here as community members, mothers, as Carla said, aunts, grandmas, cultural carriers, women leaders in our tribal communities, and just people who live with the consequences of the water decisions being made without regard for the original people of this land. We're here because many of our relatives can't be here, and we speak from the heart from our ancestors, those living in the present, and for those from the generations that are yet to come. Today many cannot be here because they're working, they're caregiving, surviving, living in rural places without transportation, and living across the U.S. into the Mexican border where, you know, crossing is just simply not safe. However, our people depend on the very decisions regarding our water that are made here by the individuals in these very rooms without the proper consent or consultation and inclusion of our people, and we carry their voices with us today. We speak with humility and responsibility and love for our communities, and we speak with one clear message that the Voluntary Agreements must be removed, or at least, you know, from the Bay-Delta area.	Please see Common Response 11.1, Tribal Engagement and Tribal Beneficial Uses, for a discussion on tribal outreach and engagement and tribal comments on the VAs. Please refer to Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.
1516	4	Is my thing on? Can you hear me? My name is Victoria Martinez. I'm from the Southern California region. I'm Gabrielino Tongva tribe, and I'm also Pit River, and I just come from the tribal community in Southern California, and I also carry the Pit River roots from the north. Like many people today, my family's story spans regions from the concrete of Southern California to the rivers of Northern California. People assume just because we live in the city, our water issues don't affect us, but Southern California drinks Delta water. Our native families drink the Delta water. When the Delta is unhealthy, our people feel it hundreds of miles away.	Please see Common Response 11.1, Tribal Engagement and Tribal Beneficial Uses, for a discussion on tribal comments on the VAs. Please refer to Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		And for those of us who have ties to Northern California, like my Pit River families, we feel that impact is twice. We see the harm to the Trinity and the Klamath systems, and we see the harm to the water we drink in the south. The Voluntary Agreements were negotiated without our people. They prioritize subsidized corporate agriculture over rivers, fish, and our communities. They do not protect water quality for urban families who already face environmental injustice, and they do not protect the rivers of our northern relatives who depend on. We cannot support a plan that excludes our voices and puts our health at risk. So I come from the Chiricahua Band of Apache people, like I mentioned, and our roots stretch across from what is now the U.S.-Mexico border. The border is political. It's not cultural, not spiritual, not ecological. Our families, our ceremonies, our languages, and our responsibilities exist on both sides. Water moves the same way our people move. It travels from Northern California down through the Central Valley into the Southern California and continues into Mexico, and water from Mexico moves north as well. These waterways carry life, memory, and responsibility across the landscapes that have always been connected. These Voluntary Agreements ignore the reality. They ignore the families who live on both sides of the borders. They ignore the interconnectedness of our ecosystems. They ignore the fact that the water decisions made here for the community. The community is far beyond this building. Voluntary promises cannot protect cross-border communities. We need enforceable protections that honor the movement of the water and the movement of our people for our relatives in the U.S. and in Mexico. So I'll pass it back over to you, Nikcole	
1516	5	NIKCOLE WHIPPLE: Okay. Yeah. I'm sorry that we are kind of off from our slides. We kind of, you know, came.	The State Water Board has conducted extensive public and tribal related outreach and appreciates the significant input from tribes and environmental justice communities related to the

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		NIKCOLE WHIPPLE: Okay. Okay. NIKCOLE WHIPPLE: Thank you. So, you know, just tying back to, you know, I spoke a little bit about the Native American cultural resources that are, you know, not necessarily included in all of these places and spaces and all of the ancestral ties of all the tribal people who are in the water, in the basin and the watershed. We can go on to the next slide. But, you know, I did talk a little bit about the restoration. You know, we talked a lot about restoration projects and, you know, in those restoration projects, again, being a cultural burn, I'm a project coordinator for Big Valley under a CAL FIRE grant. And when we talk about those restoration projects, you know, there was again talk about fire mitigation and restoration. And we have to really talk -- think about those surveys as to, you know, every one of us, we are Indigenous First People, but we all come from different ways in every place. You know, what's the most beautiful thing about California is that, you know, is that the diverse, not only diversity, but the ecosystem, you know, and we can -- we have to -- we can't just choose one style or form of agreement. And so, I'm glad to hear that, you know, you're talking about both regulatory as well as, you know, getting those flows. But I don't believe that just automatically restoring -- doing these projects that don't include Indigenous people's voices and surveys in the restoration projects, because each area is very, very unique and very, very diverse, and so we have to have these surveys from Indigenous people leading and guiding as to what it is, again, that is native to the area, what is going to make these fire buffers. And also, you know, again, when we talk about -- you know, I live in Lake County, and the entire place is supposed to be a riparian area. You know, Eel River, the entire area is a riparian area. So when we talk about fire, we're talking about we have to stop killing our riparian areas if we want to mitigate fire, and the restoration projects have to be specific to the regions and the ecosystems in that area, because they are all very different. Every	Sacramento/Delta Update to the Bay-Delta Plan. Please refer to Staff Report Chapter 13, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, for information on the State Water Board's efforts to engage more robustly with California Native American Tribes and integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge/tribal knowledge into the State Water Board's Bay-Delta Plan update and implementation processes.

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		one of us smudges and sages, you know, has sages, but they're all extremely different. And we have -- we know that. We learn that. That's our Indigenous knowledge that needs to be included when working with these restoration projects. Next slide. We talked about Indigenous food sovereignty. You know, again, my -- I have much heartfelt love for Carla and her sons. My gifted name is that I was given, it is customary for us to receive, have namings as children. And mine was Little Girl from Where the Tules Grow. And that was gifted to me by my grandfather, because in Round Valley it was known to have been full of tules. Today you won't find any tules in Round Valley. But in Lake County, where I'm at, I've had the opportunity to work on some seed propagating and transferring of tules, which is a very -- which is a staple throughout the continent. You know, it's not only in California, but of all Indigenous people. And so for the first time, when I was on with my fire crew and training with Carla's sons, I got to eat tule for the first time. And it was a beautiful, beautiful thing that her son was able to show me how his ancestors gathered and ate and what places to eat. But the sad part about that story, you know, me being so connected and wanting to learn more about the tule or the name that I've been gifted, was that we both stood there after he was, like, so excited to share that with me. We both stood there in Clear Lake. And we were both like, had to think, is it safe? Is this Indigenous staple food safe? Should we? And we looked at each other at the same time. And we're like -- and you know, we're looking at our relatives from Middletown and from around the lake. Like, you know, he's looking at them like, can I feed this to her? And they're like, look at me like, are you willing to do it? And I was like, well, well, I, you know, I really wanted to try it and I was excited to learn, but I did eat it. It was delicious. But those are the things that we are sacrificing is our food staples and our food sovereignty when our waterways are destroyed and damaged. You know, this is a picture of my father. And, you know, we've talked -- it's not -- you know, him and the elders out on the	

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		Abalone Point, Rest Point (phonetic) area, surf fishing. And so when we talk about, you know, the connections, again, the waterways, the reason why I connected so deeply with Corrina Gould was because I got to interview her in my work with San California Salmon. And she talked about how the smelt used to run like it was -- you can walk on it, and you can just see silver smelt all over. And it was like, you know, I feel the same way because we grew up eating surf fish and now we're struggling on our coast to even get some of the surf fish. The plate there is food offered by Marva Jones who was, you know, one of the only people -- families in her nation, in her area who are, you know, passing on that food sovereignty of how to prepare these small fish, which are equally as important as any of our other salmon and Indigenous foods. But, you know, I just really want to keep reiterating how important it is that we be included in the understanding of the wellness, and the health of our people is dependent on Indigenous food sovereignty and food staples that are, you know, tied to our entire continent, our entire world, and the indicator species. You know, we have acorns, elderberry, all these different things that we are in need of. Next slide.	
1516	6	GALI: I really do appreciate that you mentioned how we're all unique and individually, no matter how similar our tribes are, every single tribe has its own distinct individual needs, and so I really appreciate that you did point that out. And I believe you had a question for them. RODRIGUEZ: Sorry. Not so much a question, but I just kind of wanted to respond to Board Member Firestone's comments earlier about, you know, to fully evaluate and create a regulatory framework to move forward in good faith with all the tribes that respect us as tribal citizens and tribal communities. You know, the tribes that are here today, we're here because we want to advocate to be able to keep our tribal pathways alive and invite members of this Board to come out into our communities to see	Please refer to Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		how these, how our relationship with the land, with the water, with our food sources, and how important that is to us as tribes and to be able to, you know, maintain a healthy environment and feel included in your guys' regulatory framework process.	
1516	7	NIKCOLE WHIPPLE: Next slide. I'm sorry. We -- you know -- we're going to go ahead and go through these slides. You know, this was more -- you know, we have plenty of executive orders. We have the Fish and Game Code that all include all -- you know, are not -- you know, everybody's fairly familiar with. You know, I really appreciate Regina pointing out that, you know, all of our tribal people, you know, when we were moved and forced into reservations or some of us taken from our reservations and not being recognized today, none of us gave up our water rights. And that, you know, Mr. -- on the Tribal Board yesterday, you know, we heard how important from Calusa and from our Far North relatives that, you know, it needs to be understood and told over and over again that, you know, it may be your job and your duty today to oversee the water rights, which we understand is a struggle. But just to be clear and to be frank, none of us gave any of our water rights away. And so we really want to be here side by side as, you know, taking, you know, you know, I have to reiterate, you know, we're tired of consultation and we're tired of -- and, you know, I really appreciate your comment as well as being on the other side. It's like, you know, it's no different for our sovereign governments. You know, I really, really, truly admire and appreciate my tribal government because I know that there are some tribal governments who feel obligated to only allowing their elected officials to speak and to be present. And while I depend upon my tribal officials to make our decisions, they depend upon us to be making public comments and being out in the public, speaking on the needs of our people. And so, I appreciate your comments as well, Ms. Firestone, of being on, you know, both sides and recognizing that we do have a dual citizenship when it comes to being constituents of the state as well as tribal members.	Please see Common Response 11.1, Tribal Engagement and Tribal Beneficial Uses, for a discussion on tribal reserved water rights. Please refer to Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		Next slide. I'm going to go ahead and let Morning Star speak next on, you know, what she wants to share. But, you know, again, I just want to say (speaks in Northern Pomo) thank you in our Northern Pomo language to my relatives. And, you know, in our language, you know, we, you know, it has been taught to me by some of our linguists that, you know, we don't have -- we are all one people, we are all here together, and that we don't have friends, we are all relatives. And so, that's why I use k'ik'inema (phonetic), you are my relatives, we are in this work together. And I want to express, you know, sincere gratitude and thank you to our women advocates, again, our matriarchs and our -- the practice of our traditional ways in leading and fighting for our waterways. Together we are one people. (Speaks in Northern Pomo.) It's Yuki. One people, one fire. (Speaks in Northern Pomo.)	
1516	8	GALI: My name is Morning Star Gali and I am a member of the Ajumawi Band of the Pit River Tribe, and I'm here today, again, on behalf of Save California Salmon. I have been here since 2017 providing public comments. I also work for the International Indian Treaty Council. Since 2008, I have served as the California Tribal and Community Liaison and in 2022 formed an organization called Indigenous Justice. And so happy to be here today and apologies that I missed the last panel. We're doing double duty with the City and County of San Francisco. And so I was there, and thank you for the time being extended to talk about tribal rights, beneficial uses, and consultation. If we can go to the next slide, please. GALI: Thank you so much. And so, I want to start in the right to water to talk about what rights-based approaches are in an international Indigenous rights framework. And so our rights as Indigenous peoples and our rights for all peoples in terms of human rights, they are inalienable and inherent. They are passed down to us from the creator. No one can take them from us. No	Please see Common Response 11.1, Tribal Engagement and Tribal Beneficial Uses, for a discussion on tribal reserved water rights and incorporation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge/tribal knowledge into the State Water Board's Bay-Delta Plan update and implementation processes. Please also see Common Response 11.1, for responses to tribal comments on the VAs including the VA development process. Please also see the response to comment 1516-9 for a discussion of mercury contamination.

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		one can grant them to us, but they are violated. And as we see, you know, and what's happening with tribal beneficial uses and we see what's happening with these Voluntary Agreements, the violations are happening on an everyday basis. Indigenous peoples' rights to water are those human rights under an international law. According to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted by my tribe, by Pit River Tribe in 2012, Indigenous peoples have inherent rights to their traditionally owned or used lands, territories, and waters. This includes rivers, aquifers, wetlands, and coastal waters as cited in Articles 25 and 26. Next slide, please. Water is not a commodity. It is a sacred, cultural, and intergenerational. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes that Indigenous peoples' spiritual relationship to water and our responsibility to protect it for future generations, that Indigenous peoples have the right to govern and protect our water systems. This includes the right to own, use, develop, control, conserve, and restore waters and water ecosystems, that any projects impacting Indigenous waters requires free, prior, and informed consent. As we're all aware, that did not take place in the State of California, as California was founded on the genocide and erasure of California Indian peoples. Dams, diversions, and groundwater extraction, hydropower mining, and water privatization cannot proceed without Indigenous consent, that states must recognize Indigenous law and water tenure systems, as UNDRIP requires fair processes that respect Indigenous customs, governance, and decision-making, not unilateral state allocation. That water protection is inseparable from health, food systems, and survival. UNDRIP affirms that Indigenous peoples' rights to sustenance, health, sanitation, and culturally appropriate living conditions, that each are dependent on clean water. We can go to the next slide, please. I think that's a picture of us from 2017. The Voluntary Agreements and consultation, that Voluntary Agreements cannot	

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		replace Indigenous rights. Agreements that exclude tribes or pressure them into compromise do not meet UNDRIP standards unless they are entered freely with full information and without coercion. Consultation is not consent. UNDRIP makes it clear that consultation alone is insufficient, that free, prior, and informed consent is the legal and ethical threshold for water-related decisions, that agreements must be Indigenous-led, enforceable, and rights-based. Anything less risks legitimizing continued water extraction, ecological collapse, and treaty violations. How does this impact our Northern California rivers? These are the real-world impacts that we are seeing, that Northern California rivers are at the center of this crisis. Rivers such as the Klamath, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Trinity, Pit River, Eel, and McCloud are Indigenous lifelines, culturally, spiritually, and economically, that water diversions and overallocation have caused real harm. We have seen the salmon collapse, toxic algae blooms, mercury contamination, and dry riverbeds directly impacting tribal food systems, ceremony, and health. As Ms. Whipple was mentioning about eating the tule from the Clear Lake area, my youngest daughter is here. Her family is Elem Pomo, and every time she goes to visit her grandparents, every time she's brushing her teeth, we know that there is 100 times the standard of safe mercury that our children are using to -- you know, for every day washing their face and brushing their teeth. You know, our children are navigating challenges such as being legally blind and legally deaf, and they think that it's a connectivity issue in terms of the connectivity of their tissue and denigration of that. Indigenous peoples are being asked to absorb the consequences of systems that we did not design, and while corporations and agribusiness benefit, tribes are left defending rivers for everyone. That protecting rivers is our treaty responsibilities. This is not charity. That treaties, under Article 6, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution, treaties are the supreme law of the land, and so that these are constitutional violations that are taking place, and UNDRIP reinforces those states' obligations to uphold Indigenous water rights.	

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		In closing, Indigenous peoples are not stakeholders. We are rights holders. Any water policy, Voluntary Agreement, or climate solution that ignores the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is incomplete and unjust. That protecting rivers is protecting our lives, and when Indigenous water rights are upheld, ecosystems recover, communities survive, and future generations inherit something worth protecting. Indigenous peoples' right to their traditional territories, lands, and waters, that is recognized that Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual and material relationship with our sacred lands, territories, waters, coastal seas, and other resources which we have traditionally owned, occupied, or otherwise used, and that this underscores Indigenous stewardship and cultural rights related to water systems in terms of protection of resources and the environment as part of Indigenous rights. The Declaration states that Indigenous peoples have the right not only to their territories, but also to conserve, restore, and protect total environment and productive capacity of our lands, territories, and resources, which include the waters and water ecosystems. This provision supports Indigenous authority over water quality, conservation, and natural resources decision-making. Can we go to the next slide, please? And so this is information on tribal engagement. I can provide my comments in writing if that is helpful. And I believe -- do we have one more slide after this? This speaks to some of the working group and the challenges that we have had in navigating these plans. You know, we come here and provide public comment, but as it was stated earlier, you know, there is an expectation that we are here on behalf of -- speaking as tribal members, that we have a responsibility to be here. We have a responsibility to continue to provide information such as this, as the violations of -- continued violations when it comes to Indigenous people's rights and international Indigenous rights-based frameworks.	

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		And I think there's -- is there one more here? There might be one or two more slides. So here are our recommendations. Once again, the Water Board should incorporate specific TEK policy, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, policies and guidelines in protection of tribal fishing and water rights under guidance from tribes, inclusion, meaningful engagement, and decision-making capabilities to tribes. Again, consultation and coordination, and that the Voluntary Agreements are exclusionary and directly harmful to tribes and should only be used to meet regulatory goals, and tribes should be consulted and their input should be incorporated into Voluntary Agreements and that, you know, our Indigenous science-based flows are best to protect those tribal beneficial uses. So I know that was a little lengthy. Thank you so much for your time, and it's an honor to be here with these water protectors.	
1516	9	NIKCOLE WHIPPLE: Thank you, greatly appreciate that. I just wanted to, you know, follow up with, you know, I really appreciate Morning Star pointing out, you know, we talk about the Lake -- Clear Lake Basin is that, you know, the amount of mercury, the loads that are being poured into the Cache Creek. You know, when we talk about a lifeline, it's like how do you go -- how do you not observe and be considerate of, you know, the people in Lake County who are suffering from the water there, and then want to continue to take it and put it into another river system, and the permitting process and that is not very adequate as well. NIKCOLE WHIPPLE: Thank you.	The Clear Lake Mercury Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) was adopted by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Regional Water Board) on December 6, 2002 and approved by the USEPA in 2003. This TMDL is part of a Water Quality Control Plan managed by the Central Valley Regional Board. A management plan for Clear Lake is being continuously implemented and monitored, and the State Water Board recognizes the connection to the tributaries and Delta covered by this update. Mercury issues in Cache Creek are described in the Staff Report, Section 7.12.1, Surface Water. USEPA approved a methylmercury TMDL for Cache Creek and its tributaries in 2007 (USEPA 2007). Cache Creek drains about 2 percent of the Sacramento River watershed but contributes approximately 30 percent of all the mercury from the Sacramento River watershed (^Central Valley Water Board 2010). About half of the mercury from the Cache Creek watershed is trapped in the Cache Creek settling basin as a result of sediment deposition, although estimates of trapping efficiency are variable. The remainder of the mercury drains to the Yolo Bypass and the downstream Bay-Delta (Central Valley Water Board 2011b; DWR 2015b). While the Cache Creek settling basin helps reduce total mercury, it has also been found to be a

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			source of methylmercury. Alternative methods are being considered for maintaining or augmenting the mercury trapping ability of the settling basin while also reducing methylmercury formation. The State Water Board will continue to look for opportunities to collaborate with the regional water boards, other agencies, tribes and stakeholders to improve water quality in California's waterways and protect beneficial uses of water through basin planning processes or other control programs.
1517	1	WARREN: My name is Jan Warren. I'm a person of faith who lives in Contra Costa County. I've been supporting Save the Delta since 2009. Our nation seems to be going through a period of time when the sanctity of all living things has been diminished, and where so many things are commodified, even water. Many have highlighted the substantial evidence that demonstrates that from 50 to 60 percent of unimpaired water flow is necessary for juvenile fall-run Chinook salmon. We know that they need cold water and a consistent flow to be healthy and ultimately to survive. Habitat is an important part of the story. Chinook salmon spend their developmental stages first when newly hatched, living in gravel with a large yolk sac for nutrients. That first spring, they are in freshwater rivers before adapting to saltwater and moving to estuaries like the Delta and then the ocean. They spend one to six years in the ocean before returning to rivers and large tributaries to spawn and die in freshwater. Once they spawn, the adults die. Their carcasses provide vital nutrients for the river ecosystem and may feed juvenile salmon from the previous year still living in the freshwater. They can migrate up to 2,000 miles to reach their native spawning grounds. A lot of them don't make it to the ocean and a lot of them don't make it back to spawn because somewhere along the way their habitat is not healthy. In 1994, the Sacramento River winter-run Chinook were officially listed on the endangered species list. The Delta smelt	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		went from threatened in 1993 to endangered to extinct in the wild. Salmon like the Delta smelt are telling us we're diverting too much water. Our ecosystem is in danger. No VAs, no tunnel. Thank you.	
1518	1	CULTON: Good afternoon, Chair Esquivel and members of the Board. My name is Molly Culton. I'm speaking today on behalf of Sierra Club California and our half a million members and supporters statewide when I say please reject the VA pathway and implement a regulatory pathway based on the best available science. The best available science tells us unimpaired flows of 55 percent or more in the Sacramento River and its tributaries no matter the precipitation level and dryness of the water year is the bare minimum needed to sustain the system. Anything less will further degrade the Delta ecosystem and increase proliferation of harmful algal blooms and warm water temperatures. Habitat restoration is not a substitute for science-based flow standards. We urge the Board to adopt a science-backed and enforceable regulatory pathway that does not rely on faulty and inadequate Voluntary Agreements. You've heard a lot of comments this week, the vast majority of which have been critical of the Voluntary Agreements and skew heavily in favor of adopting a regulatory pathway for management of the Bay-Delta. In fact, there has not been a single member of the public who has commented in support of the VAs that wasn't on a water agency's payroll. The question I have for you now is who are you going to listen to? You will be taking a side with this decision and you will either side with corporate agriculture and big business water interests or be on the side of the environment, tribal nations, and normal everyday people who live, recreate, and depend on not only the Delta but all of California's river and land systems. The second question I have for you is who do you answer to? We know the Voluntary Agreements have been a priority of the Newsom administration and I understand the pressure that you've been under, but that is not an excuse to abdicate your	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		responsibility to preserve and protect this critical ecosystem, the heart of California's water system, from unsustainable water diversions. California has the opportunity to become a leader for sustainable and equitable water management that benefits all users, not just the ones who fund electoral campaigns or have the power to appoint Water Board officials. This is an opportunity to right historical wrongs. Current and future generations will be affected by the decision you make for decades to come. Please make the right decision. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.	
1519	1	NADIA WHIPPLE: Sorry. (Speaks in Tongva.) Hello. my name is Nadia Whipple. I am from Round Valley and my dad is Juan Soria from Mishmakon (phonetic). My mom is Nikcole Whipple and she's from Round Valley as well. And what is voluntary, and voluntary for who? If frontline communities, tribes, and fishermen aren't meaningfully consulted, is it voluntary? Is it imposed? The Bay-Delta Plan prioritizes water exports over people, salmon, and the river itself. Our rights are not optional. Healthy rivers meaning living fish, protected culture, and real consent. Protect our river, protect our fish, protect our future. Thank you.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.
1520	1	SKAGGS: Thank you. My name is Ron Skaggs and I live in the City of Stockton. I've lived there for a little over 20 years. I was born and raised in the Fresno area. My first relationship with the Bay-Delta was when I was young, but I didn't know it. I was fishing with my grandfather and great-grandfather out of Eureka. My great-grandfather told the stories of when he started fishing, he could catch as many fish, salmon, as he wanted inside the Bay, and then later it was outside of the Bay, and then it was three salmon per day, and then it was three per week. And then it was none, eventually. I've not had the chance to fish with relatives for a long time.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		When I moved to Stockton, I got more familiar with the Bay-Delta issues because of living there. Some of our tap water comes from there. I've taken my own boys canoeing in the sloughs in the area. I've watched the vegetation as it's taken over some of our waterways. I watch the water quality go down. I've watched the salmon season shrink and shrink to nothing. So today I'm asking you to reject the Voluntary Agreements, go back to a minimum flow of between 55 and 65 percent, and take the health of the Bay-Delta seriously for all Californians, and we believe it can be a balanced approach. Thank you for your time today.	
1521	1	ROSIE WHIPPLE: Good afternoon. My name is Rosie Whipple. I'm a Round Valley Tribal member and a descendant of the Scotts Valley Tribe. I'm a cultural firelighter and (indiscernible) steward. I'm only 11 and I know VAs are wrong. Healthy rivers mean healthy plants. VAs create fire fuels by killing the plants. I want all our rivers to be safe and healthy for our people, animals, and plants. VAs will ruin our rivers and water and I'm ready to help stop.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.
1522	1	CONRAD: Good afternoon, Chair Esquivel, Vice Chair D'Adamo, and members of the Board. It's really been an honor to be here the last few days and today, and I appreciate a lot of gratitude for the way that you run these proceedings and honor all the public comment. My name is Louise Conrad. I am with the California Department of Water Resources and I have the honor of serving as a lead scientist. A focus area for my work is co-leadership of the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Science Committee. And what a big charge we will have if the Revised Plan as drafted is adopted. It's no secret that it is going to be a huge challenge to evaluate the ability of the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes assets to provide benefits for native fishes. And I wanted to just say a few remarks that get to some of the points that have been coming up that regard the science over the last few days. One of them just came from actually day one. There	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project. Also refer to responses to Comment Letter 1108.

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		was a lot of discussion about the need -- and I think it's been continuing over the last few days -- the need for enforceability. And I think others have commented that the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes parties, including Department of Water Resources, are very willing to engage in this really important aspect. We do agree this is a critical part that the measures are enforceable. And part of that gets to the science because we do need to develop targets that we can track effectively. And Board Member Firestone, you mentioned the importance of performance tracking metrics for habitat projects. We agree this is really, really important. And the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Science Plan, as we presented previously to this Board, contains draft metrics that would be submitted to the Board for habitat as well as flow metrics, flow measures. And this does adopt a tiered structure so that we can get to disentangle some of the complexity around evaluating this. We are grateful for the Revised Plan. It does mention the need and then requires these targets to be developed, and we are grateful for the additional time that's been added for us to do this in collaboration with others. That's a really important part of the revision, and we welcome the chance to work collaboratively to do this. And hearkening back to your remarks at the beginning of today, Chair Esquivel, the need to build bridges. And I see in the Revised Plan a number of places where there are vehicles to do this, and I am grateful and very willing to work collaboratively with opposing parties to the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program to do this and hope that science can be a venue for us to work together. This could be about developing the targets. It can be about how we evaluate the metrics. And I'm just very grateful for the work that you've done to put those pieces in place for us, and I wanted to express a commitment to following through with that. So thank you for your work, and thanks for the chance to comment.	

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		CONRAD: Agree. If I may – CONRAD: I'm not going to take too much time. No. No. This is -- thank you. I appreciate the back-and-forth. CONRAD: I completely agree that and the way that it is coming together in the draft allows for that collaboration and that it to be really done in a transparent public space with the Board. We do have written comments that we will be submitting with some suggestions for how to further improve it. That includes a clear development of a roadmap for how the revision and review of monitoring programs would be developed, and having that as a product in the early years of implementation so that there is a very transparent and collaboratively developed agreement on how we're going to move forward with those reviews. I think that's really important. I did have another thought, I guess, oh, about regarding the interagency ecological program. You may know that this is one of the ways that I've professionally grown up in my career, is by interacting with and being part of the science that has occurred as part of the interagency ecological program. So I have watched changes occur. I also see that the interagency ecological program is still very much alive, and in terms of the collaborative science that happens at project work teams and at the annual workshop, which is again occurring this year, I believe in April or maybe March -- sorry, I should know -- I will be there. It is those fundamental pieces. While the governance has -- there's been a lot of discussions about that -- those fundamental pieces of the active work of scientists and the inter- and coming from different agencies to work together is still very much alive and DWR invests in that every day. CONRAD: Yeah. CONRAD: Yeah. Agree. That's one -- this area actually is one of the places where we've been doing a lot of thinking as we look to revise our science plan in response to the peer review that was facilitated by the Delta Science Program. We are developing	

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		guidance for system-specific plans that would be for individual tributaries, for example, on how they should design their monitoring to robustly evaluate non-flow measure projects, whether it's in channel rearing or flood planning projects, and how much monitoring they need to do in order to have enough ability to really measure those effects and whether they are bearing out the desired benefits. So I completely agree, and it was really helpful for us to do that independent peer review to get some feedback on exactly how we should be structuring this, and we look forward to, over the coming months, working with the leads of individual systems, their science leads, in developing these programs consistent with a revised science plan that has been peer reviewed. CONRAD: I appreciate that comment and acknowledge the complexity that underlies it. I think that with the time that is in the Revised Plan, which is six months after adoption to provide targets, our goal is to -- not to overuse a word -- but our goal is to make them consistent with developing biological goals for the overall plan. It's really important. And I also see that in the Revised Plan there's acknowledgement that we need to move towards kind of a unified science plan for the whole system. It's super ambitious, but honestly, it's one system, and we need to bring the science towards it in a cohesive way, and that is meant as an inclusive statement because it is -- I agree with many of the comments we've heard today. There needs to be, and in our science charter, we have acknowledged Indigenous knowledge as a form of best available science on par with other forms of science, and it needs to be a seat at the table and not an occasional request for input, and we do look forward to hopefully setting up a framework where it works that way. CONRAD: Agreed. Yes. CONRAD: Thank you for that comment. I think that the HRL science committee is actively working now to get as much detail down as possible, and I take your comment that the time frame piece -- like, when will there be available data, when will there be available reports, and if there's an opportunity for even early	

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		reporting, yes, we would like to do that -- and the triennial synthesis report's being meaningful. And I think the formation of the science committee with the acknowledgement that it is not yet complete until we have all parties at the table. I think that's work that we have needed to do because there is no way on day one -- it could be we could be ready for a triennial synthesis report if we hadn't been working since 2022 with this group and with a governance committee overseeing it. CONRAD: Agreed. Thank you. CONRAD: Thank you for the comments and questions.	
1523	1	WATKINS: Thank you -- excuse me -- for this opportunity and also for the virtual options and the YouTube. Honestly, you know, it's been a very busy week. You guys know that. But the ability to make up time and hear comments at 1.5 or two times the speed is actually very convenient. So my name is Josh Watkins. I'm the water utility manager for the City of Redding, and I just heard a comment. You know, obviously, I work for a water agency, but, you know, I also represent, you know, 90,000 individuals, and I need to do everything I can to ensure their water security and affordability for my customers. So this is -- you know, while, yes, it's, you know, it's my job. I'm a civil engineer and all, but there's, you know, a much more personal connection to, you know, to all of our -- all of the work that we do. So, in saying that, Redding, we are -- we're not a small disadvantage, but we are a disadvantaged community. And so there are concerns that, you know, any reduction in the ability for us to take surface water, while maybe we could make up for it with groundwater -- although you have the SGMA and GSA, you know, kind of restrictions or calculations to consider -- it could potentially have an impact on our customers. And then I also have been hearing some comments about, you know, the habitat, you know, habitat restoration. Not that it doesn't do anything, or maybe it's not enough. We just need more	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		cold water. But in our experience, especially in such a highly engineered, modified system, we flush cold water down the river, especially up in Redding, and we just end up with these small kind of anorexic fish that are migrating downstream. What we've found in the, you know, in the past 10 or 15 years in doing side channel restorations and habitat restorations, even more than just gravel augmentation, is that we provide habitat, and as soon as we open up a side channel that's been closed off from, you know, for decades, we open it up, we get it to, you know, the right depth and flow, velocities, and things like that, and we end up with fish in there immediately. And so I would like to just reiterate that habitat is very important. You know, we know there's no one silver bullet for any of this, right? So let's, you know, we have a Healthy Rivers and Landscapes approach that is ready to go. The details are there. I think the Plan is good. And in a quote that's somewhat related to Voltaire, let's not let the perfect be the enemy of the good, right? So, you know, we're ready to go. The time to act is now. This has been studied. You know the history. You know, it's -- whether you look back into years, decades, or multi-decades, the time to act is now. We need to make a decision. We need to go forward. There's a collaborative plan that's put together, and let's work together. We really do. Even people on different sides, we do have the same goals, and I think we can work together and just push the ball forward, right? We've got to do something. We all recognize that. Let's do it.	
1524	1	ABRAMS: Can you hear me? Okay. Hi. I'm Zara. I'm from Bombay Beach, which is on the part of the Colorado River Delta Salton Sea area. So I've been in your Water Board meetings digitally because I didn't think this would ever be possible, and I'm just really happy to be here and see you guys. Nice to meet you. But I noticed some similarities between the Colorado River Delta, Bombay Beach, and the Salton Sea in this predicament, and when obviously the salmon and the correlation between the	Please see Section 7.5, Air Quality, for information related to the environmental setting, potential impacts, and mitigation measures for air quality impacts that may result from changes in hydrology or changes in water supply. The draft Staff Report mentions the potential impacts from agricultural land fallowing, which could result in increased fugitive dust if vegetation regrowth does not occur. However, fallowing lands may reduce windblown dust because these lands

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		Corvina that are obviously not existing at the Salton Sea anymore because of the agricultural runoff and the depletion of the water and all the things, including the dust, which is -- I noticed nobody really talked about your, what is it called, the Healthy Rivers and Landscaping thing. I didn't read the full thing, but to my knowledge, it doesn't take into account the dust that would be created from the fouling of the fields. And that is a problem because we know down at the Imperial Valley, they literally have air monitors in the schools because the dust is so bad, and that's not existing in any other part of the country, and I don't want it to happen here. And we also know that the reason why this all happens to the Salton Sea is because it doesn't have rights, but that's not the case here. This water does have rights. And it's really nice that you guys gave the opportunity for all the First Nations to come and talk. I had no idea that this was even happening until like two days ago, and my friends were like, let's go. I was like, okay. But there's some correlations between knowing that the water has rights and being able to implement things like the things that are happening further up the Colorado River Delta with people like Bill Zeedyk, who is a partner with the Zuni people to make Zuni bowls and induce meandering, which he coined, which restores aquifers and the Colorado River Delta, and I think it could do the same here. And he's just a phone call away. He works with the Colorado River Delta, up Delta in Colorado and two of the neighboring states. I think that's all I have. Thank you.	would not be in active agricultural crop production, leading to less soil disturbance. Additionally, fallowed fields may retain crop stubble cover and experience vegetative regrowth, which may reduce dust emissions.
1525	1	HECK: Good afternoon, Chairman Esquivel. My name is Ricki Heck. I serve on the elected Board of Directors for the Nevada Irrigation District. I have been there for eight years, and -- wait a minute. I just had my notes here. Thank you.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		And I'm here from NID because I really want to express NID's support for the HRL program. We are really proud of the flow and habitat contributions that we've made the last number of years, and we really urge your Board to please support the HRL. Unimpaired flows would be catastrophic to our local economies, our agriculture, and would severely increase wildfire risk. Our agriculture just set record amounts of money that they made for our community, over \$30 million for just small little Nevada County, and that would likely go away in the event you all voted for the unimpaired flows. So that's it. Thank you for your time. I drove here from Grass Valley. Thank you so much.	
1526	1	SHANT SIYAHIAN: Hello. Yes. Thank you for doing this for the people. We are coming from the area, and I thought I would also get up here and say a few words. So we're here with a Balinese priest, and we've been learning about the way that Bali manages their culture and their cosmology and their natural landscape. And some of the things that our friend here has been sharing with us is about the three principles within the cosmology, one of which is the calendar and how important having an energetic calendar that is tied to how nature actually flows, and the cycles of nature, makes a difference in understanding how to work with nature. So here we are wanting to make a plan for how the water flows are going to be managed. And I know there's many competing interests. However, energetically, we can either roll with how the energy flows or fight against it and then reap what happens. So that in terms of also hearing, wanting to have timing -- timeline and timing, if we have a sense of this kind of -- these might be solutions that seem out of scope right now, but just seeding the possibility here is all I'm doing. We might have possibility of connecting in that way through calendar, through the liveliness of the energy and the nature and the water like that. There's a living quality to it. Something I find interesting just sitting here and observing, like I just saw maybe like one water bottle there. I know we're made of	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		water, but we're talking about water and there's hardly like a -- you know, water here that we can commune with. There's actually a real energy that we can interact with water living. And, you know, there are cultures that use water for divination. And there's an actual intelligence to it. Here we are having a conversation and making a decision on this thing and they're not really in the room. Of course, we can consult ourselves. We're, you know, 70 percent water. But, you know. And then the other the other part is how we relate with one another. You know, there's -- in the Balinese culture, we've been learning there's the Tri Hita Karana, which is, you know, people to people, people to nature, and people to the divine or some higher quality. And this kind of frame can ground us in understanding there's a relationality here. We may be polarized in sides because of these different interests. But at the -- at the core of it, we're two sides of the same coin because we're all living on a planet. We're all drinking and eating the same food and water. And, you know, as you said outside, you know, like, we can bless and we can pray to the water, and then at some point we're going to eat it and drink it. So even if we're on different sides of the table, that blessed water will be shared with both of us. And perhaps we'll come to, you know, a harmonious and win, win, win, win solution. So thank you.	
1527	1	TERAMOTO: Hello. Good afternoon, Chair Esquivel and members of the State Water Resources Control Board. My name is Jason Teramoto. I'm speaking on behalf of Mayor Christina Fugazi, City of Stockton. Stockton is a Delta City. Our economy, our environment and our public health inseparably tied to the San Joaquin Delta and the water that flows through it. Decisions made by this Board directly affect the lives of our residents, particularly low-income communities who already bear a disproportionate burden of environmental harm. The City of Stockton is deeply concerned about actions that could further degrade water quality, reduce freshwater flows or weaken protections for the Delta ecosystem.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project. Please see Common Response 7.23, Cumulative Impact Analysis, for responses to comments regarding the cumulative impact analysis. Please see Common Response 10.1, Economically Disadvantaged Communities, for more discussion on the potentially significant impacts to disadvantaged communities.

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		These impacts are not abstract for us. They translate into higher costs for rate payers, threats to public drinking water reliability, harm to local fisheries and agriculture, and increased public health risks for our most vulnerable residents. Stockton supports a water management approach that prioritizes science, equity and climate resilience. We urge the Board to fully consider cumulative impacts, climate change realities, and the voices of Delta communities who live with the consequences of these decisions every day, not just the interests of downstream exporters. We're calling for strong, enforceable water quality standards that protect beneficial uses, uphold environmental justice principles, and ensure that Delta communities are not sacrificed in the name of expediency. Stockton stands ready to work collaboratively with the State Water Resources Control Board and other partners to advance solutions that are sustainable, equitable. and protective of our shared water future. Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.	
1528	1	THORNTON: Sorry. Thank you. It was a little glitchy there with the unmuting. Good afternoon, Chairman Esquivel and Board members. Thank you so much for your work and taking the time to listen to all of us these past few days. My name is Carol Thornton. I live in Berkeley, but I grew up in Stockton, a Stag High graduate many, many years ago, and I'm also a member of Restore the Delta. I listened today especially to a lot of the talks from all the very eloquent and well-spoken tribal members, and I couldn't help but think that if they were more litigious and much richer, they might be duking it out with the likes of Mr. Resnick over their rightful water rights, where they should be at the top of all of us, but they're not, and we're still -- we're still working within this very off-kilter framework of water protection and water rights. That said, I'll get into my spiel. I grew up recreating on the Delta, and today I'm glad to be one of those to provide a small dot among the many experience of Delta residents who have testified	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		here this week. I have a fond memory from when I lived in Stockton of taking canoe lessons in the channel. What I remember most of those lessons is experiencing for the first time the amazing pull of the tide as we paddled back to shore. And to my unscientific self, it was like the river was alive, being in the water and feeling that invisible force trying to pull us back out to the channel was amazing. I felt very connected to the water and the channel. But when I went on one of the Restore the Delta boat tours a few years ago, I was so disheartened to learn that folks could no longer have those experiences on a regular basis because of the harmful algal blooms. The river became disconnected from me, dead and inaccessible. It makes me think that if I feel this bad about the loss of the living river, I can't imagine what people who have relied on the river for physical and cultural sustenance for thousands of years must feel about it. And then to know that this didn't have to happen is very disheartening. That it happened because we curtailed the flows necessary to keep the river alive, but some of those diverted flows went to irrigate alfalfa fields whose crops are sent to Saudi Arabia to feed their cattle, or to almond orchards whose crops are exported around the world, and who uses way more water than more sustainable and useful crops would use. These crops don't sustain us. My personal experience with the Delta, enjoying it as a youngster and now mourning its demise, has pushed me to learn why it is dying. When I was working, I worked as an environmental planner with the San Francisco Estuary Project, which was housed at the time at Region 9. There I had a ringside seat to CALFED, that billion-dollar plan that was supposed to save the Delta. As a naive newcomer to the field, I was optimistic that it would do what it said it wanted to do, but that failed project has faded into the past, and now we -- along with many more, and now we have this new plan, which appears to be going down the same path. I must say, with all those plans went billions and billions of	

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		dollars of our taxpayer money that seemed to have done very little to protect our water resources. THORNTON: Okay, sorry. THORNTON: I will say the one point I wanted to make is the Board is the only entity that can negotiate science-based water flows in the state, and I plead with you to be guided by the public trust doctrine and your own mission statement, that is to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations. I don't think this current iteration of the Bay-Delta Plan comes near to fulfilling that mission. I might suggest that if you were to focus on the efficient use clause in your mission statement, you might look at all the inefficiencies prevalent in many of Big Ag's water practices in the state. Maybe instead of haggling over scientifically unsupported Voluntary Agreements, HRLs, and even more limited water flows, might it be more productive economical in terms of protecting the Delta that you examine more closely and regulate these inefficiencies – THORNTON: -- rather than putting the burden of protection on proposals that have been shown to be unscientifically unsubstantiated. Thank you – THORNTON: -- very much for your time.	
1529	1	BUCKLEY: Okay. Good afternoon. John Buckley, Central Sierra Environmental Research Center. For 30 years, I've engaged in sincere efforts to find balanced management strategies for the rivers that flow into the Delta. Some of you know that. I've repeatedly seen influential water interests prevail. That's not a surprise. I understand and respect the Board's difficult role, but the Board has consistently favored the status quo instead of taking difficult actions that are needed, such as for the Bay-Delta.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project. Also see Common Response 1.3, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, for information on the VA pathway, including enforceability.

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		And despite knowing that salmon and other fish species have declined precipitously and water quality objectives are not being met, the Board is aligned by water interests by failing to adopt and to implement the balanced river flow requirements to make a significant difference for the beneficial uses. And as you know, under the regulatory pathway, objectives would be implemented by increased flows, coldwater habitat, and related strategies that are consistent with broadly accepted science. All objectives under the VA pathway would be implemented by somewhat lower flows, habitat projects with uncertain value, and assorted other commitments. And a key concern is the Revised Draft documents reveal just how complicated and convoluted the HRL commitments and requirements are. They're full of loopholes and caveats and exceptions and a lack of clear metrics so that implementation would be administratively difficult and there would be no assurance that even if there's a compliance, that key objectives will be achieved. And worst of all, despite the Water Board knowing that agricultural and other users are taking unsustainable amounts of water from rivers, adopting the VAs would postpone for at least eight more years the science-supported minimum flows that should be the beginning point for salmonid recovery and water quality goals. And the proposal to adopt the HRL strategy is not, respectfully, middle ground, but it would be a continuation of catering to the water interests who don't want to accept less water, and then continuously expand irrigated lands year after year. Staff report assesses that VAs would only cause less than significant impacts from July through December for fish species and Delta outflows, but the dire need for the Delta and for precarious native fish populations is not to have less than significant impacts, but instead shift to a straightforward and implementable regulatory pathway with high assurances for meeting beneficial objectives immediately or as soon as possible. There have already been so many years of this Board delaying critical needed actions because they're opposed by water	

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		interests. Adopting a plan that mandates leaving more water in the river is the crucial need. Water users can and will adjust. I urge you to adopt the strongest possible version of the regulatory pathway and to at least give it a chance to be assessed for a minimum of five years. And in closing, I do sadly note that after listening carefully to comments over the last few days by Board members, it seems almost certain that the Board is going to select the VA proposal despite all the concerns that have been raised, which is disappointing and deeply disturbing. Thank you.	
1530	1	HOOPER: Can you hear me, Mr. Chairman? HOOPER: Thank you for this opportunity, Mr. Chairman and members, and particularly for the robust opportunities for public comment, which you are providing during these three days. I'm a lifelong San Francisco resident, and my concerns are mostly around the impact of the Bay-Delta Plan on San Francisco itself. By way of background, I'm a former public member and Vice Chairman of the California Tahoe Conservancy for 30 years, and of course we dealt with many of the same problems that you grapple with. I also worked in an intimate way with a group on the north coast to restore the fishery of the Garcia River over a 20-year period, which turns out to be one of the big success stories in anadromous fishery and steelhead and spawning salmon and Chinook in that river. I'm a contributor to Baykeeper and Restore the Delta, so that gives you a little sense of where I'm coming from. Because of your time constraints, Mr. Chairman and members, I don't need to go through everything I was going to say. I'll submit a few comments for the record in the next couple of days in a timely manner. But I do just want to say that I urge you strongly to reject the Voluntary Agreements and adopt a regulatory pathway with strong enforcement goals. For example, the Delta will never reach its plan to double the Chinook population to 990,000 fish per year with Voluntary Agreements. In fact, that's an impossibility, and that's just one example of the reason that the Voluntary Agreements are not going to do the trick.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		So, thanks. I'll keep it short for now, and much -- I particularly appreciate the fact that you're paying so much attention to public comment at this time. Thank you.	
1531	1	BROBECK: Yeah. Thank you, Chairman Esquivel. As a water policy analyst for AquAlliance, I have served on the Butte County Water Advisory Committee and the Vina GSA Stakeholder Committee. Overallocation of California's water and climate destabilization are the drivers of water shortages stressing the Delta. Agencies are incurring Sacramento Valley Irrigation Districts to backstop surface water supplies with groundwater. The 2025 DEIR for the Water Reduction Program Agreement between the Sac River Settlement Contractors and the Bureau is a prelude to presumed Voluntary Agreements. This conjunctive (phonetic) use program offers incentives to farmers through funding programs to develop 40 more large diameter wells, allowing farms to pump an extra 167,100 acre-feet of groundwater into irrigation canals and to engage in experimental groundwater recharge programs. Funding for the 2026 and 27 North to South Water Transfers Environmental Assessment created by the San Luis Delta-Mendoza Water Authority and the Bureau proposes about 300,000 acre-feet of Sacramento Valley groundwater pumping. William Fulton (phonetic), the University of California Farm Advisor, in the 2006 pamphlet Conjunctive Water Management: What are the Challenges, explains that, quote, conjunctive management can and typically does cause larger than normal declines in groundwater levels. Our images show that groundwater provides base flow to streams and rivers. If indicators switch from surface water to groundwater, base flow to streams is eliminated and streams will leak. In the 2014 NCWA document, Sac Valley Groundwater Assessment discussed the duration of stream flow depletions caused by pumping. Quote, the ultimate effects of pumping can occur significantly after pumping starts or even after pumping is ceased. The time scales involved in aquifer responses to pumping and other stresses can be on the order of decades.	The Staff Report includes a discussion on potential impacts and mitigation measures for groundwater resources, and the consideration of SGMA and conjunctive use projects in Section 7.12.2 Groundwater. Please also see Common Response 7.12.2, Groundwater and Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, for information regarding the overlap of the Sacramento/Delta Bay Delta Plan update with the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

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		And finally, in 2014, Dan Wendell, the Senior Groundwater Scientist for the Nature Conservancy, spoke at the California Natural Resources Agency in a voice concerned about stream flow losses from groundwater pumping and how long it takes. He said the Sacramento Valley still has numerous perennial streams, however since the 1940s groundwater discharged to streams in this area has decreased by about 600,000 acre-feet per year and is going to decrease an additional 600,000 acre-feet in the coming years due to the time it takes the effects of groundwater pumping to reach streams. It takes years to decades. This represents a loss of 1.2 million acre-feet of stream flow, unquote. This is river water, stream flow that would have otherwise ended up in the Delta. I hope agencies seriously considered the long-lasting hydrological consequences of conjunctive use while creating the Bay-Delta Plan update. At a time when we're trying to increase reliable long-term water supplies, we're moving in the opposite direction if we amplify the exploitation of Sac Valley aquifers that historically support Delta flow from the north.	
1532	1	IRVING: Hi. I'd like to talk to you about swimming in the Bay. I'm a documentary filmmaker. I live in San Francisco. I've been a Bay swimmer year-round for over 40 years. And -- hang on, my -- this isn't right. Anyway. There are lots of challenges to swimming in the Bay. Sea lions, harbor seals can nip you. There's sewage spills. There's oil spills. There's plastic floating around. But one of the worst things that happened to me in my 40 years of swimming in the Bay was one summer day, I stepped into the water. It looked a little bit gold, golden, sort of golden brown. I had not heard about the toxic algae bloom that had migrated up from the South Bay and was now lapping at the shores of Aquatic Park, where 4,500 of us in the Dolphin Club and the South End Rowing Club take part in water sports and other kinds of sports. So I went in. I didn't know exactly what the problem was, but I'd never seen anything like it before, and after I got out, I didn't feel	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		good. I just want to let you know that swimmers also need protection. The animals who live in the Bay and the rivers need protection, and these Voluntary Agreements will not provide that protection. I've done enough research on all of this, and I've been a Bay proponent for a long time. I've made five films about the Bay, the most recent one being Cold Refuge. It's become my church, in a manner of speaking. It provides spiritual renewal as well as bodily renewal. And I urge you not to go -- not to sort of drop back and punt and take these Voluntary Agreements that were devised in private with corporate downstream exporters and agribusiness, and -- it's like allowing the fox to guard the chicken coop. I really hope that you don't do that. It's wrong. It's unfair. It's unethical. Thank you for considering the point of view of the human beings who swim in the Bay. Thanks.	
1533	1	RYLANDS: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Kristina Rylands, and I'm a lifelong Californian and a 35-year resident of Mariposa County, where I am the Watershed Director for the Upper Merced River Watershed Council. We're a small nonprofit organization located just outside of Yosemite National Park where we lead our community in caring for the 122 miles of the federally-protected Merced Wild and Scenic River and its nearly 700,000-acre watershed. Now you may not know our organization, but you know our river. The world knows our river. It begins in the headwaters of Yosemite National Park and flows from alpine reaches in wilderness over towering waterfalls and through the iconic meadows of Yosemite Valley that you see here that are quite literally the postcard for every California tourism marketing campaign. But the river doesn't end there at the Yosemite Park boundary. It continues through the Sierra foothills and on out through the Great Central Valley, where it meets up with the San Joaquin some 145 miles away and then flows on out through the Golden	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		Gate. It is quite literally river that rushes through the very heart of California. And I'm here today to speak on behalf of my organization and the legions of people who care for the Merced River. Yosemite's iconic Merced River is the southernmost and arguably one of the San Joaquin's most famous tributaries, and yet in recent summers, our river is making headlines for other reasons. In 2022 the New York Times shared a story of how miles of the Merced River ran dry, never even making it to the San Joaquin. Now, can you imagine that? This waterfall behind me that famously plummets over Yosemite Falls never making it beyond a dry riverbed in the Central Valley. It sent shockwaves throughout the state. It sent shockwaves through my community. And I'm here today not to debate how or why this happened. I'm here to share my voice and that of my organization and our community to urge those of you in charge to save the Merced River by simply keeping it a river. We want to see in-stream flows maintained in a year-round continuous river system that makes it possible for the salmon to return and spawn in their home waters or for families to enjoy splashing, picnicking, paddling, or fishing along the Merced, whether that's a trip to Yosemite or a trip to a local park in Snelling or Livingston. We're worried that the continued decreased flows from the Merced River will make scenes like 2022 more of the rule, and less of the exception, and we know that when something is lost, it's tough for it to ever return. We're losing our connection to a river culture in California. And when people see dry riverbeds, they forget that they are in fact deeply important connectors to our communities. We forget that there's an upstream. And so the full measure of the Merced River's 145 miles should not exist as something relegated to Instagram posts. Never again do we want to see our Merced River run dry. So I'm urging all of you today to please come together for some real solutions that will keep ample water in the California rivers,	

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		and I so appreciate the opportunity today to speak with you and to provide our comments. Thank you.	
1534	1	STEWART-FREY: Yes. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to speak at this important hearing here today. My name is Iris Stewart-Frey. I'm a hydrologist and I'm also a professor of water resources at Santa Clara University. Much of my research centers on the sustainability of California water systems under climate change. My research and that of my colleagues has shown that with climate change, flows in California are already coming earlier and are warmer, leading to more prolonged and frequent drought periods even before human withdrawals are taken into account. These earlier, lower, and warmer flows are highly likely to increase by the mid- and by the end of the century. This means that the flows in the Bay-Delta rivers are over-extenuated not only by direct human withdrawals, but increasingly by the climatic changes that we have precipitated, and that the effects of these withdrawals will be even more pronounced. I would like to emphasize that science, not politics, must guide the Board's decisions here. There is no credible scientific analysis showing the Voluntary Agreements will meaningfully improve conditions for fish, wildlife, or water quality. In fact, the science shows that 75 percent for the Sacramento watershed and 60 percent of the flows for the San Joaquin watershed are needed to support the ecosystems that sustain not only the rivers, but also us humans -- the human systems. In that context, the Revised Plan is a step backward. Limiting 55 percent of the flows only to the wettest third of the years and dropping to 35 percent in dry years abandons ecosystems precisely when they are most vulnerable and as they are becoming more vulnerable with climate change. Science shows that habitat is not a substitute for flows and that varied natural flows are what is needed for ecosystems to have a chance to stabilize. Human water use must be managed within ecological limits now, not later. While water demand will ultimately be constrained by	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project. The benefits of the VA pathway are described in Staff Report Section 13.5, Beneficial Environmental Effects, and in the Scientific Basis Report Supplement (Staff Report Appendix G2).

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		hydrologic reality, whether we like that or not, delaying sustainability merely shifts the burden of adjustments to a later time. If we postpone this action, California will still be forced to live within its water means at some point, but only after the native fish populations and aquatic ecosystems have already collapsed. Is that really what we want to be voting for today? Voluntary Agreements continue to lock in a failed status quo. Massive diversions and exports that are driving salmon and native fish towards extinction, fuel toxic algae blooms, harming Delta communities, and causing a collapse in the fishing industry. I urge you to adopt and implement a strong updated Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan. The Board's own science shows that we need at least 55 to 65 percent of unimpaired flows in most years to protect fish and water quality, central valley rivers, and the Bay-Delta Estuary, which are public trust resources. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to speak here today.	
1535	1	POWERS: Good afternoon, Water Board members, and thanks for this opportunity to present my views. I'm the Conservation Director for San Jose Flycasters Fly Fishing Club, and my involvement in conservation just stems from my deep concern for the health of our local ecosystems, particularly those in our area, in the South Bay area, and throughout northern California watersheds. I've personally witnessed the decline that we've heard about in native fish in the Sacramento River Valley and Delta. The numerous speakers we've heard over the past few days have provided sobering facts underscoring this decline and its drastic effects that impact the fishing industry, tribal culture, and the overall ecosystem. We've heard about the lack of scientific evidence that the VA pathway will improve overall fish populations. There seems to be no evidence showing that habitat restoration alone has meaningful impact on the decline of native fish. The evidence does show that decreasing flows to less than 55 percent	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		unimpaired flow will continue to further decline in fish population. We've also heard that the outcomes of the current VA proposals will take eight years or more to determine success or failure. Do we really have eight more years of declining fish populations to risk with this experiment? I commend the Board for your patience and diligence in reviewing the many proposed updates to the Bay-Delta Plan and your attempt to provide the most equitable solution to a complicated system with many competing interests. Your actions will have a lasting impact on the populations you serve. I strongly urge you to base your decisions on the scientific data that demonstrates the adverse effects of decreased flows in the VA pathway. With the effects of climate change and a need to balance water usage influenced by urban growth and agricultural demands, please do not make our native fish population and all of us who enjoy and depend on it pay a disproportionate price in achieving the balance. Thanks for allowing me to provide my perspective.	
1536	1	BLACK: Good afternoon, Chair and Board members. My name is Abigail Black. I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you again today. I have lived in San Francisco for 11 years and I care deeply about the Bay and the rivers that sustain it. I'd like to express my concern that the current Bay-Delta Plan does not ensure adequate flows nor the enforceable protections necessary for water quality, salmon survival, as well as the protection of tribal beneficial uses. The Clean Water Act requires that water quality standards protect designated and existing beneficial uses, including fish and wildlife, and that those standards are actually attained. If flows and temperatures do not support spawning and rearing of salmon, the Plan is not meeting that mandate. Fish and Game Code also requires dam operators to release enough water to	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project. Also see Common Response 1.2, Water Quality Control Planning Process, regarding the consideration of beneficial uses and the Clean Water Act and see Common Response 1.3, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, regarding the VA pathway, including enforceability. See the scientific basis reports (Appendix B, Scientific Basis Report in Support of New and Modified Requirements for Inflows from the Sacramento River and its Tributaries and Eastside Tributaries to the Delta, Delta Inflows, Cold Water Habitat, and Interior Delta Flows (2017) and Appendix G2, Final Draft Scientific Basis Report Supplement in Support of Proposed Voluntary Agreements for the Sacramento River, Delta, and Tributaries Update to the San Francisco

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		keep fish in good condition, but we have seen repeated salmon fishery closures over the last three years. That outcome signals that current protections are not sufficient and extra protective measures are needed. I'm also very concerned about the lack of enforcement via the Voluntary Agreement pathway. In a time where salmon survival and access to cool, clean water are on the line, we really need stronger enforcement and stricter science-based standards, not voluntary compliance mechanisms. The Clean Water Act requires attainment of water quality standards and not just aspirational progress. Objectives should be backed by clear compliance triggers, monitoring, and consequences in order to protect fish and Bay-Delta communities. Voluntary Agreements cannot replace binding requirements when the law demands protection of beneficial uses. Tribal beneficial uses must also be fully protected. Both the Clean Water Act and the Porter Cologne Act require protection of all beneficial uses, including tribal, cultural, and subsistence uses. The Endangered Species Act requires agencies to avoid actions that cause take of listed salmon. A plan that allows inadequate flows, weak temperature protections, or redirected impacts undermines those obligations and harms tribal communities whose rights depend on clean water and healthy salmon populations. I urge the Board to adopt enforceable flow and temperature objectives, strengthen compliance and oversight, and ensure the Plan fully protects water quality, salmon survival, and tribal beneficial uses consistent with state and federal law. Thank you for your time.	Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Water Quality Control Plan) and Staff Report Chapter 3, Scientific Knowledge to Inform Fish and Wildlife Flow Recommendations, Chapter 4, Other Aquatic Ecosystem Stressors, and Section 13.5, Beneficial Environmental Effects, for information on the benefits of the revised proposed Plan amendments, including for salmonid spawning and rearing.
1537	1	VELASQUEZ: Can you hear me? VELASQUEZ: Hi. My name is Trisha Velasquez. I'm the Central Valley Organizer at Safe California Salmon, and prior to working here, I managed large-scale habitat restoration projects for salmon and other species in the Delta. I'm also a Southern	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for information on the VA development process and for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		California Indigenous person who has been reconnecting to my culture that I grew up separated from, and my best teachers have been plant and animal relatives, so I feel it is important for me to use my voice wherever I can to speak up for them. I'm here to comment alongside our tribal and NGO partners to be yet another voice saying that the VAs are inequitable, racist, exclusionary, ineffective, and unacceptable. You've already heard powerful testimonies from other commenters and during yesterday and today's tribal panels, including directly from Native youth, and I would like to use my time to again implore you to listen to the real voices of people in this region and reject the Voluntary Agreements. Nearly all comments from tribal members and representatives, members of the general public, educators, scientists, faith leaders, and nature enthusiasts, and communities have been telling you not just during this hearing but for years that the Voluntary Agreements will not work to protect fish, will not work to protect clean and safe drinking water, and will only serve to benefit those that seek to further exploit the water, and yet you talk as though you've already made up your mind to ignore these voices and proceed with them anyway. You said this morning that you've heard the same comments for years and that is because you still have not addressed the many valid concerns that so many people have to keep bringing to you. We do not need the VAs to restore habitat, nor do we need them to manage water in the state. Those are excuses and there are many other methods to implement these important things. We need a real Bay-Delta Plan with adequate and enforceable regulations that will actually regulate major water diverters who have shown time and time again that they cannot be trusted to be in charge of regulating themselves. We did not get any of the environmental protections in place today because polluters decided to suddenly limit themselves. We got them because people fought for them, and those environmental laws then provided numerical and enforceable requirements that clearly laid out how impacts to the environment need to be regulated.	

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		I also want to point out, since I don't think this has been called out yet, that I've seen these same major water users here today that claim to care about protecting fish also routinely show up at Fish and Game Commission meetings anytime there's a fish species being considered for listing under the California Endangered Species Act to speak against their protection and to seek exemptions from regulations due to their expected impacts to their profits. They do not care about protecting fish or providing water for communities. All they care about is their profits. I know at least some of you recognize the failures of the VAs and know that they will lead to more fish death, more illnesses from polluted water, and more impacts to Indigenous people who have already faced so much violence from this state since its inception. Have the courage to stand by science and what is right and do not adopt the VAs. Listen to the voices of the youth and elders that have spoken to you. The people will remember your decisions and this will become your legacy.	
1538	1	ROWE: Can you hear me? ROWE: Good afternoon. Thank you for having me. My name is Trish Rowe. As you said, I'm basically a concerned citizen from Sonora, California. I was born in San Francisco. I'm a lifelong citizen of California. The Bay-Delta is in crisis, as we all know, and we all know that fish need water, as do humans. Attempts to increase fish populations via non-flow measures, the Voluntary Agreements, such as habitat restoration and invasive predatory management are certainly important, but they are not a substitute for higher flows. They also have little impact on critical issues such as water temperature, quality, floodplain inundation, and harmful algae blooms. Voluntary Agreements are ineffective. They're flawed. They have failed outright and are not based on biological goals. They would produce very little new water, would not produce significant new habitat, although proponents falsely claim new	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		habitat is all that's needed. What is needed is for you, the California State Water Board, to wholeheartedly take up what you've been charged to do, which is restore the Bay-Delta ecosystem. Do so based on available and legitimate science, not wishful thinking, political expediency, or Big Ag concerns. I urge you to consider movement on a legacy vote, your legacy vote, that will impact everyone, including disadvantaged communities, Native tribes, the fishing industry and community, our children, and all future generations. Give our youth hope for the future and outcome that everyone can be proud of. And I expect the Board to represent all of the state's interests, protect all beneficial uses, and follow through with your legal mandate, which is to restore the Bay-Delta ecosystem. You are in a position to change the system, and again, legally mandated to do so. Proudly step forward and do it. Thank you for this opportunity.	
1539	1	LOUIE: Good afternoon. Denise Louie speaking as a member of Center for Biological Diversity and as a San Francisco native. I would like to thank you for your courage once you've moved forward with the science-based Bay-Delta Plan. I would thank you for following your 2025 Strategic Work Plan this year. Of the four goals of the work plan, one is to protect and restore watersheds, marine waters, and ecosystems, which includes surface water quality and flow management that protects fish, wildlife, and other beneficial uses. At this point, the imperiled Bay-Delta ecosystem warrants our best efforts. That means increasing freshwater flows as originally approved in 2018, in addition to non-flow measures outlined in the Voluntary Agreements. It doesn't have to be either or, it should be both. So I urge you to implement your goal to protect and restore waters and ecosystems with all due speed. And please tell us, if 2026 or 2027 prove to be dry or drought years, will you increase the freshwater flows? You have a huge	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		responsibility to manage California's freshwater, so please let's get to it. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.	
1540	1	MAMMON: Hello, can you hear me? MAMMON: Thank you, Chair Esquivel and the Board. My name is Roger Mammon. I'm the president of the West Delta Chapter of the California Striped Bass Association, Secretary of Restore the Delta, and past president and still a board member of the Lower Sherman Island Duck Hunters Association. I have recreated in the Delta for over 40 years and advocated for the health of the Delta over 30. I was the only, I was only able to watch yesterday's meeting as I had other obligation on Wednesday. I heard compelling testimony on all the reasons to keep the more water in the system and nix the Voluntary Agreements. I will not bore you with the things that you already have heard. California has been blessed with a wonderful and unique delta. It is an inverted delta due to the constriction of outflow at the Carquinez Strait. There is only one other delta -- inverted delta in the world, and that is on the Tagus River in Portugal and it is slowly disappearing due to sedimentation. I hope that this doesn't happen to our unique Delta. I look at the Delta Estuary as a living, breathing ecosystem. It is like a lung and it inhales and exhales twice a day with the tides. The mixing of that tidal influence in the shallow bays of the Delta creates a food chain of life. Sadly, the federal and State Water Projects starve the natural functions of the Delta ecosystem, turning it into a lake where it cannot adequately produce the microorganisms that start the food chain. They have turned our Delta from a tidal estuary into a lake. It also operates that way to prevent salinity intrusion into the Delta because exports allow saltwater intrusion, which has a longer residency time in the Delta and it is not fleshed out. The only way to breathe life back in the Delta is to have the 75 percent unimpaired flows through the Delta and a minimum 55 percent in dry years. The system needs to be fleshed out to	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		remain healthy. There are so many cuts into the Delta and it is bleeding to death, and now there seems to be two additional export operations that are in the future, and that is the enlargement of the San Luis Reservoir and the potential reservoir in Colusa, which would all be taken out of the Sacramento River watershed. I often wonder if we would be in this predicament had the State Water Resources Control Board adjusted the flows every three years since 1995. It is time for the Board to do the right thing, leave more water in the Delta, and throw out the Voluntary Agreements. Thank you for allowing me to speak.	
1541	1	GRIFFITH: Good afternoon, Chair. My name is Kyle Griffith and I am speaking today on behalf of the Californians for Water Security Coalition. We are a statewide coalition representing labor unions, businesses, social justice advocates, family farmers, and others in support of responsible investments in infrastructure to sustain California's water supply. I wanted to start out by recognizing the huge amount of work that has gone into the draft proposal. California's water policies are famously complex, so thank you to your team and all the participating agencies who have contributed. Everybody wants to see the Delta thrive. Ensuring that we protect this important resource while also ensuring the reliability of California's water supply is a delicate dance, and balance is tough to achieve. Unfortunately we know that California's hydrology is shifting, and the snowpack that we relied upon to refill our reservoirs during the spring is becoming increasingly rare. In fact, earlier today we found out that we'll need another major storm in order to help this year's snowpack catch up. As more of our precipitation arrives as rain, we need to ensure that the rules that govern how and when we can move water reflect our new reality. The proposal before us today uses the	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		best available science to help us address that balance. As mentioned by others earlier this week during presentations, independent review by UC Berkeley and the Delta Independent Science Panel, I found that a Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program is a viable option to help us ensure the beneficial uses of the Delta are maintained while also restoring fish populations. You know, it's really easy to fall into the same dichotomies of north versus south, urban versus rural, farms versus the environment, and we need to come together as a state to put forward real solutions to help the environment and protect other beneficial uses. The staff proposal manages to do that, and we urge the Board to adopt the proposed Bay-Delta Plan and Healthy Rivers and Landscapes. And you know, before I wrap up, Chair, you know, it's just it's been a long couple of days and I really appreciate the grace and the patience that you've shown with all of us, and you know, I appreciate everybody who's taking the time to hang tough and wait for public comment, so thank you.	
1542	1	HOLLINGSWORTH: Can you hear me? HOLLINGSWORTH: Good. I'm Gordon Hollingsworth. I hail from Modesto, California. I would like to add my voice to the chorus in opposition to the proposed Voluntary Agreements. I am not a scientist, and I approach this as a fisherman, and over the course of let's say about 40 years, I have noticed that the fish returns for salmon and steelhead, but mostly salmon, in the Tuolumne River and the Stanislaus River are much better three years following a wet fall, and correspondingly, three years after a drought year, the fish returns drop precipitously. Simply put, you can't raise fish without water, and no matter how well intended the Voluntary Agreements are about habitat restoration and protection, that alone is not enough. I strongly urge you folks to go down the regulatory path, because I think that's the only future that will bear success.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		And thank you for my opportunity to make these comments.	
1543	1	MCDONNELL: Hi. I'm Marty McDonnell. I've been a river person for all my life. I'm 75 years old. I have a whitewater rafting business called Sierra Mac River Trips, and we host people on whitewater rapids on the Tuolumne River. I've been boating and swimming in the water from Yosemite all the way to the Golden Gate Bridge, and I really appreciate what you guys are doing to look forward into the future and come up with a problem, a solution to a problem that is really monumental. I have been following river politics since the construction of New Melones Dam on the Stanislaus, and I think part of the problem is the incentive to do drip irrigation versus flood irrigation. Flood irrigation is only feasible because water is relatively cheap, and the dichotomy between the feds and the state dispersing different water to different commercial users is not an equitable solution. It's extremely valuable to have access to cheap water. If a large agribusiness is getting water to grow nuts and sell nuts and rice and cotton to other countries, those profits should be mitigated with something like tariffs, perhaps, or taxes, export tax, and if the agriculture industry uses 85 percent of the water, industry, 12 percent, and the domestic use is only 3 percent, really, the ag business needs to step up to the plate and be a better consumer. Thank you very much for your time. I look forward to your solution.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.
1544	1	KAHN: Good afternoon, members of the Board. My name is Mike Kahn. I was born and raised in the Bay Area, and it's the environmental beauty of this place that shaped who I am and directed my career. My latest work has been dedicated to a simple mission: connecting people to nature. I'm the founder of a startup called Explore Local Nature, and we're creating a one-stop shop platform for all the amazing outdoor recreation events and organizations available. I'm working on this because I believe people protect what they connect to.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project. Also see Common Response 1.3, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, regarding the VA pathway, including enforceability.

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		When someone experiences a thriving river or sees a salmon run, they don't just like it. They love it. They vote for it. They pay for it. And they start to think more about sustainability of their actions. But today, I'm here because I'm deeply concerned that the connection between the people of California and our public trust waters is being severed by short-term economic special interests. For too long, bottom-line profits have been allowed to destroy the habitats that sustain us. We're currently looking at a Bay-Delta Plan that has been watered down to the point of failure. The Voluntary Agreements currently on the table are a rubber stamp for the status quo. They were negotiated behind closed doors, excluding the very tribes, conservationists, and local communities who rely on these waters most. If you let these Voluntary Agreements stand, you are letting the fox run the hen house. I'm not the only one who has said that. We are prioritizing Big Ag over the beneficial uses that belong to all Californians: the salmon, the recreation spaces, fishing industry, tribal communities, and their heritage. So my ask to you today is clear. Reject the Voluntary Agreements. Voluntary is not control. VAs lack enforcement and rely on habitat restoration that is useless without the water to actually flood it. Adopt a plan based on science, not politics. We need sufficient flows of at least 55 to 65 percent. We've seen the salmon seasons canceled for years. We've seen the toxic algae blooms. We know that 80 percent of our water goes to agriculture, often used inefficiently, while our ecosystems starve. This isn't just a policy failure, it's a failure of courage. I know the political pressure from the governor's office is immense, but you have a job to do. You are the stewards of our public trust. Please do not let politics get in the way of doing what is right. Choose a legacy you can be proud of. Stand up for the fish, the	

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		tribes, and the people of California. Protect our flows, reject the VAs, and do your job. Thank you.	
1545	1	RIDDIOUGH: Hi. Can you see me? RIDDIOUGH: Hi, I'm Justin from the Bay Area, and this is my first civic engagement in the form of public comment, and I'm not sure I would want to ever do this again. Watching this has just filled me with dread and left a pit in my stomach. It's like watching a disaster unfold in slow motion. All the experts. Everybody's come up and has painted a picture that we can see what's going to happen. We know what the outcome will be, and it's ecosystem collapse, and people's ways of life is going to be lost. When the tribes speak, and they tell us that they were not part of the discussions from the start, and how this is going to impact their future, you know, you can see that the process is broken fundamentally. And I would also like to mention to Firestone that your comments of being on both sides, and how our words matter, but you support the VAs, it's just a bit tone-deaf in the midst of a number of Indigenous and tribal people telling and begging for a future in their lives. That was just a little bit hard to swallow. And so I just want to leave this with say, you know, you're not only failing us, but you're failing yourselves if you vote for the VAs. Thank you.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.
1546	1	FROST: Good afternoon. FROST: Fantastic. I'm going to start with who I am. I'm a taxpayer, a citizen, and I love the Delta, and some of these truths I'm going to share with you. These matter to me, and I've done a lot of research. These matter to me, and I want to let you know. Water is life. Ribbons -- excuse me, rivers are ribbons of life, and the Delta is a great big bow of life and energy. Biodiversity is the real wealth of this planet, and we are going broke spiritually and biologically. There is no substitute for flow if life and biodiversity	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		matter. Over-engineering of the hydrology of California is a significant if not the only culprit of this current calamity that we're facing. Another very important truth that I hold is the California Water Board consists of leaders with authority to speak truth to power, establish priorities, recognize needs versus wants, and communicate values. One of those values would be maybe water flowing to the ocean is not wasted, and here's why, people of California. That's one example. You know, we do not exist separately and distinctly from the environment. The illusion of separation of humanity versus the environment is another reason we're in this calamity. Okay. I'm going to take a deep breath as I'll close our eyes and imagine us floating up into space, and we're looking down on what's now known as California. There's no borders. There's no cities. There's no counties. We can just see the energy flow. And if we go back in time hundreds of years, if not thousands of years, this was the most densely populated place in the entire North American continent. There was gold in the ground. Six million salmon swimming through the Bay every year. Megaflora, megafauna, rich biodiversity. And this environment was also shaped by fire and flood in significant extremes. 20-year droughts, 100-year droughts, massive fires. It still supported all those people and all of that biodiversity through the rhythms of nature. These were self-healing systems that live on the ebb and the flow. That abundance had sanctity and sacredness with the native peoples who have spoken today. If we fast forward today, 2026, every unit of water is converted to a unit of money. The markets are insatiable, and governments have to deal with taxes and deal with markets, and again, this financial market creates misaligned incentives and conflicts of interest galore. At the end of the day, we all will die on the path that we're on right now. If you look at the last 300 years and look how radically we've altered everything, we're at the end of the line. There is no more faking it at this point in time.	

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		The VAs are asking you to legislate a drought, a permanent drought. We and biodiversity cannot survive without those flow times. It cannot be a constant ebb. We are – FROST: -- in real trouble. FROST: Yeah. The monetary costs, the environmental costs, and the opportunity costs of accepting these VAs far exceed the benefits, and we will all lose if the VAs are accepted. We cannot study this thing to death.	
1547	1	DIERMAYER: Thank you for the opportunity to share my views. I'm Sonia Diermayer, a supporter of Yosemite Rivers Alliance and a lifelong Sierra Club member. Like so many others in the past two days, I have addressed you before about the same Water Quality Control Plan update. Excuse me. It's been almost 30 years now. We need decisive action now. I'm a skier of the Mokelumne River and American River backcountry, and I'm painfully aware that we need more snow. As always, the coming weeks will make the critical difference between a normal water year and a monolithic year. As I ride Amtrak trains -- excuse me again. As I ride Amtrak trains along the shoreline of the Bay and the Delta, the enormous masses of water moving downriver through the Carquinez Strait and the vast expanse of water in San Pablo Bay and San Francisco Bay can look deceptively limitless, but that monolithic surface obscures the accumulation of multiple slow-motion catastrophes that previous speakers have spoken eloquently and authoritatively about. Warm water, no smelt to be found, toxic algae poisoning, salmon searching for the smell of their natal streams as they seek to spawn, economic and cultural losses, smelts being trucked around the water bodies to give their species a sliver of a chance to survive, some of the ecosystem economic and cultural losses mainly due to insufficient cold freshwater flows in the rivers. You and your staff presented you with strong science-based flow	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project. Also see Common Response 1.3, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, regarding the VA pathway, including enforceability.

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		requirements in 2010 and 2017. In 2024, you proposed a reasonable draft standard between 45 percent and 65 percent of unimpaired flows. It's extremely discouraging to see that now, with conditions steadily worsening, the backstop flow standards in your current iteration of the update have been weakened and that those won't even apply to most of the large water users who are signing on to the VAs. Asking those users to voluntarily limit themselves with no real enforceability seems like an abdication of your fundamental responsibility. The non-flow measures proposed in the VAs can never effectively compensate for missing water. More tweaking and more compromise always leaves the ecosystem with more losses. I implore you to please exercise the regulatory power you have. Find the courage to do what's right to give our San Francisco Bay-Delta communities, tribal communities, fishing communities, and the ecosystem a chance. Reject the Voluntary Agreements and the proposed water supply adjustments. Please adopt a strong 55 percent to 65 percent of unimpaired flows regulatory standard. Thank you.	
1548	1	DIEGUEZ: This is Gregg Dieguez. I want to commend the staff and the Board for their efforts in holding three days of hearings, and I invite you all to relax while I speak. I know from my time as an undated elected official attending midnight meetings of town councils and water and sewer boards how much focus is required. So, I invite the Board and staff to stretch, wiggle their toes, and roll their shoulders as I provide comments tangential to the barrage of science which has formed the content of much of these sessions. Tangential, but relevant. I'm not a subject matter expert like many of the panelists you've heard from, but in 2003, I did co-found the award-winning Clean Technology Program at the MIT Club of Northern California, and I am the Director of Sustainability for SHIFT Bay Area, which stands for Sustainability in Housing, Infrastructure, Finance, and Transportation. I have long familiarity with water issues, but I suggest a major issue before this body is not the science.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		Some of you are familiar with the game of Russian Roulette. Perhaps you've even seen it in the movie The Deer Hunter. Human civilization is playing a game of Russian Roulette with our environment. Every year that goes by is another spin of the climate crisis cylinder containing the bullets, and another click of the trigger as we hold our breath to see what the damage is. Your role in the decision before you is to decide whether to load more bullets into the revolve. The survival of the river ecosystem is at risk, and you are deciding how much risk to take. I've observed many pressures on state officials, both elected and appointed. Certainly the governor's wishes are one. Another pressure comes from smooth-talking, well-paid lobbyists. Considerations of one's future employment and political careers can also bear on decision-making. But the factor about which I worry the most is NIMTOO: Not In My Term Of Office. Far too often I observe government officials making decisions whose effects will be long after they're out of office because they don't want to get yelled at by the people who elected them, or disappointed the people who appointed them, or take a position in the face of vocal opposition. My request of this Board and staff is that you not let NIMTOO affect your decision-making. In the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children. So I ask that you not put more bullets into the revolver of our environmental Russian Roulette. Let the Delta plan stand without Voluntary Agreements, let the waters flow, and our descendants remember your wisdom for generations to come. Or not, if the risks you allow go the long way. Thank you.	
1549	1	HAYES: Can you hear me? HAYES: Can you see me? HAYES: Awesome. Hi everybody. My name is Janet Hayes. I live in	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		Placerville, California, on a ridge overlooking the South Fork of the American River, where I kayak all year long. Being able to look out the window and see the river down at my feet, it's constantly on my mind. This is my community's playground, and both people and wildlife like it best when it has plenty of water. As a retiree, I volunteer for a non-profit organization called the American River Conservancy. We conduct environmental education field trips for school kids. Because we've been talking about salmon so much, I thought I'd share with you one of the programs that we offer. It's called Sockeye Sense. Prior to the kids arriving, we set up a course with string on the ground that represents a watershed and its network of connected rivers. When the kids arrive, we show them a map of the American River watershed and teach them about the life cycle of salmon. Then they get to pretend they're salmon, swimming upstream to their spawning grounds. And since salmon migrate using their sense of smell, the kids start by sniffing a cotton ball with a unique scent that identifies their native river. They follow the string path leading them to their home, and each time they come to a branch in the river, they take another sniff and follow their noses upstream until they reach their spawning grounds. Afterwards we talk about some of the obstacles the salmon could encounter on their journey. I love this program because someday these kids will become the guardians of our planet, and it's important that they learn about how all life is connected and what they can do to protect it and the water resources upon which we all depend. The deep connection to my backyard river and the watershed is what brings me here today to speak to you all. The stories told by the virtual commenters over the past two days have just been so inspiring. I've appreciated having listened to many of them and will briefly summarize what I feel are some of the important takeaways. The San Francisco Bay-Delta is the largest estuary on the west	

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		coast of the Americas. It provides habitat for more than 500 species of fish, birds, and other wildlife. It serves as a major stopover on the Pacific Flyway, where millions of birds stop to eat and rest as they migrate. It is also a migration route for salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon traveling to and from their natal streams to the Pacific Ocean. My message today to the Water Board is quite simple. As other people have said, water is life. We need ample water flowing in the tributaries through the Delta into the Pacific Ocean. For this reason, I urge the State Water Board to reject the proposed VAs because they would maintain the failed status quo. Massive diversions and water exports are driving species to extinction, causing toxic algal blooms, destroying the fishing industry, and impacting tribal and cultural uses of water. Instead the Board should proceed expeditiously with adoption and implementation of the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan, including a strong – HAYES: Am I getting close? HAYES: Yes. Yes. So I want to remind us of the Colorado River, an important water source for seven western states, including California, and I just want to remind everyone that once you give away the water, it's very hard to take it back. And Board, this is your moment to set an example and to make a decision to protect the Delta ecosystem and all life that depends upon it today, tomorrow, and for the future, and for the kids pretending to be salmon swimming home. This could be your legacy. Thank you very much. HAYES: You're welcome.	
1550	1	HOOK: Hey, good afternoon, Chair Esquivel, Vice Chair D'Adamo, Member Maguire, Member Firestone, and Member Morgan. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about the proposed Voluntary Agreements and the revised Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		My name is Jeffrey Hook. I'm a lifelong resident of California. I am, and I assume you are too, enchanted by our natural environment and have a persistent curiosity to learn how nature works. I want to tell you a story. A middle school student was assigned a class project to plant a tree in the schoolyard and care for it. Water was available but required carrying buckets filled across the yard from a spigot. The student didn't want to do the work. Instead, he found a nearby pile of bluish rocks that kind of looked like water and placed them around the base of the tree. He thought it might fool the teacher. To the surprise of none of us, the young sapling started to wilt. The boy's father, wanting his son to get a good grade, made a financial donation to the school. He arranged a private meeting with the principal behind closed doors. Soon after, the principal met with the teacher and said the student's approach was very creative, give him an A. You all know exactly what's wrong with this story. The tree's fate depends on water, not money, politics, and wishful thinking. But influence and money distorted the outcome. Everyone involved is now expected to pretend that rocks are water and that failure is success. That's what the monetary agreements are. They're bluish rocks pretending to be water. The VAs were negotiated behind closed doors with a few powerful lobbying groups. But the salmon and river's health depends on conditions we have learned through science and not on money, politics, and wishful thinking. The real science has already been done and ignored. The rivers need real flows, not simulated ones. All of you on this Board know the truth, and the public knows it too. Recently a wealthy donor to USC was prosecuted for preparing to fake a child's athletic record, and people were rightly outraged. If such behavior is unacceptable in education, why should it be acceptable in public water policy? You have been appointed to this Board to uphold science, protect public trust resources, and act in service of the common good, not to ratify special interest	

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		deals made behind closed doors. So I ask you, when it comes time to vote, will you be Jerome Powell or Lindsey Graham? Will you be Elizabeth Warren or Carol Leavitt? Will you stand with science and a healthy future, or cave to influencers whose wishes can be legislated, but the outcome will be the destruction of the natural resource we all depend on? You cannot nourish a tree or salmon on bluish rocks, no matter how much someone has pressured you to pretend otherwise. Have the courage to vote against the VAs and you'll sleep better at night knowing you made the correct choice. Thank you.	
1551	1	BETTNER: Yeah. Good afternoon, Chair Esquivel. Thank you so much to you and Board members for your hearings. Thanks to staff. You know, this work has been pretty momentous, and we thank you for the last couple of days, and apologize not to be there in-person. We did have a raw users conference this week, but it was a good opportunity to check with some of our federal partners, particularly as it relates to Healthy Rivers and Landscapes, so we appreciate that opportunity as well. There are three main points today. One I did want to talk to you about a few successes. I know just given this challenge here, and just the decisions you have to make, there are some good things happening that will continue to happen. I thought it'd be good to record those just to let you know what these will happen as we go forward. We've been working with our bridge group, which is members of our water community, our fishing community, both inland and ocean, reclamation, other. We've been working on a couple restoration projects. Just recently, we put 1.8 million juveniles from Coleman Hatchery out on floodplains to continue to test and work on our Healthy Rivers and Landscapes proposals around floodplain rearing. And these also included doing parentage-based tagging, which is a new form of tracking fish and where they come from, who their adults were, whether they're hatchery or natural fish, so continuing this new science and project as we go forward.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		We're also working on an imprinting program where we're putting a half a million fish and rearing them within the Sacramento River -- not on Battle Creek, not in hatcheries, but on the river -- to make sure we can test a hypothesis of whether these fish successfully migrate out of the Sacramento River and whether they return back and not stray. So just a lot of science that we're doing and monitoring as we go forward and programs we'll continue to do as we work through adopting this program. This year, as you know, we also saw historic returns on the Sacramento River, both on winter run and fall run. And recall, these fish were fish that outmigrated during 2022-2023, 2022 being one of the worst records in terms of hydrology. But yeah, we saw successful fish leave the system, and then this year we saw over 14,000 adults of winter-run return back to the Sacramento River. Unfortunately we only saw about 12 percent of those survive as they migrated out. Our models for the fishery suggest that there should have been 30 percent, but we only saw 12 percent, so obviously our models are not right and we really need to spend some time on improving our biological models to better understand how fish and how many fish should be living in our system. So good news on that in terms of fish. I do want to say thank you to my friend Gary Mulcahy, who was on one of your panels earlier. And I know even though he and I may have some differences of opinion on your plan, we continue to work together on ways to reintroduce fish to the McCloud River and above Shasta, both on a reintroduction program and also working on volitional passage. And I think regardless of how we move forward on a Healthy Rivers and Landscapes, that continues to be our commitment to work with the Winnemem Wintu tribe. And we also can do a lot of work on Battle Creek. And even though it's not part of our Healthy Rivers and Landscapes proposal specifically, we see a lot of hope in what Battle Creek can do for winter run and other species. And then lastly, just want to report that Reclamation has	

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		released a new model for the Sacramento River Shasta-Trinity Complex. And this is the model was developed in open, transparent matter. It was peer-reviewed, and it's a model that Reclamation will be using this year. And that's basically -- that started all from funding that the Sacramento River Settlement Contractors provided, and with some feedback that you as a Board and your staff provided about the need for Reclamation to improve its temperature tools, and Reclamation responded and did that, and we hope that we can do the same for our biological models and tools to better understand how fish migrate through the system. And again, one of our goals of the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes proposal. So again, just some successes, good news that are happening. I think it's always good to make sure, again, in light of some of these tough decisions, that you're hearing good things that are happening out in the community as well.	
1551	2	Regarding Healthy Rivers and Landscapes – BETTNER: Yeah. Sure. Just on our proposal, I just wanted to say that we continue to make a commitment to our 100,000 acre-feet. As part of our proposal, as we looked at your document, we just want to note that you did not actually describe the half a million acre-feet that we're making available in critical years, and that's part of the 2024 biological opinion. And if you have that in there, we think there'd be a better improvement in terms of your modeling for fishery benefit, both for winter-run and fall-run. And also, we will be working on a CEQA document regarding our action, and we want to make sure that as you develop your document, we need to make sure that we see a correct description of our Healthy Rivers and Landscapes proposal, since we'll be needed to take that and actually doing a CEQA evaluation of our alternative. Your document is currently more programmatic in nature and not action-specific, and so we want to make sure that we do a proper CEQA evaluation for our proposal. And then lastly, just going back to our Healthy Rivers program as a whole, you know, obviously we've heard a lot of the concerns	Appendix B.1 of the December 2025 revised draft Bay-Delta Plan included the commitment referenced by the commenter in the description of reference conditions for the 2024 LTO. The Staff Report includes the CEQA analysis of the revised proposed Plan amendments, including the VA pathway.

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		during the hearing today. In the last couple of days, we understand some of the concern raised by you as a Board and other commenters. And we want to make sure as we look at our HRL program holistically, we're being responsive to those concerns and comments. So thank you very much. BETTNER: Yeah. Those will be in our comments. Thanks, Chair. Thank you.	
1552	1	HUTCHINS: My name is Tim Hutchins. I'm a member of the Yosemite Rivers Alliance and our retired fishing guide. In the course of my profession, I spent hundreds of days on the San Joaquin River tributaries, but no more. The entire ecosystem is so badly damaged by chronic low flows that it's collapsed. The continued further destruction of the Bay-Delta ecosystem is a foregone conclusion if this Board fails to reject the proposed flows in the VAs. After 30 years of non-compliance with state and federal laws, wild salmon are on the brink of extinction. Salmon return numbers have gone from 30,000 wild fish returning to the Tuolumne River to as few as 200 in some years. That's a decline of more than 99 percent. This year's return numbered 3,000 fish, but those fish were almost entirely stray hatchery fish. The unique genetics of the Tuolumne River's wild salmon has already been lost. The number of steelhead returning count at the Tuolumne River weir in the last eight years is a total of one fish. That's one as in O-N-E. This is what extinction looks like. Salmon and steelhead are iconic species, but the other native fish in California that all depend on adequate flows are also on the same path to extinction. The Tuolumne is the only river in the entire southern San Joaquin Basin that is currently actually connected 12 months of the year to the Bay-Delta Estuary. The Merced, San Joaquin, Kings, Tule, and Cahuilla Rivers are already 100 percent diverted in all but the very wettest years. This violates the California law that requires dam operators to maintain adequate flows for fish populations below dams. Currently these rivers are just miles of	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project. See the Scientific Basis Report Supplement (Staff Report Appendix G2) for the scientific basis for the VA pathway. Also see Common Response 3.1, Fish Protection, for information on the use of best available science.

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		dust bowl-dry riverbeds for years on end. Nowhere in the Healthy River and Landscapes plan is this violation of California law addressed. The Board needs to categorically reject the VA flow proposals. There is no scientific basis for the VA flows. If you fail the act, the violations of both state and federal law will continue. Corporate agriculture will continue to act with impunity. Diverters will be unconstrained by any restrictions except those written by themselves and their lawyers with a total lack of science-based knowledge or evidence. So, what's next? State approval for similar VAs for other extractive industries? I'm sure the oil, gas, mining, and timber industries would certainly welcome similar self-regulation. Every member of this Board knows that the VAs are unacceptable and corrupt. Rejecting them is the only way forward. Reject all non-science-based flow proposals and we just might be able to have a future with a functioning Bay Delta system because extinction is forever. Thank you for your time.	
1553	1	WOODBIDGE: Good afternoon. My name is Bill Woodbridge from -- hello? Can you hear me? WOODBIDGE: Hi. My name is Bill Woodbridge from Santa Barbara. Good afternoon. The San Francisco Bay-Delta is the largest estuary on the west coast and arguably the most endangered ecosystem. The Bay-Delta provides habitat for more than 500 species of fish and wildlife. It serves as a major stopover on the Pacific Flyway, and as the migration pathway for salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon. In California, water is a public trust resource, meaning it belongs to the people of California. The state can determine which beneficial uses have priority. Agricultural exports such as non-essential pistachios and almonds benefit a few farming corporations at the expense of beneficial uses valued by Californians. Benefits are being privatized while the costs are	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		being socialized. I suspect the largest, richest, most greedy water user, the Resnick family of Beverly Hills, wants even more water at our expense to grow their pistachios and almonds to ship to China. There is a new documentary titled Pistachio Wars online about this subject. You all should watch it to see the truth about the greed for and the theft of our water before you make your decision. Voluntary Agreements will do nothing virtually. The VAs were negotiated behind closed doors by the Newsom administration, which was seeking campaign donations, and major water users, Big Ag and the City of LA. Tribes, conservation, and fishing groups, and impacted Delta communities were excluded from the process. In dry years about two-thirds of the fresh water that would naturally flow through the Delta is diverted for agricultural and urban uses. Reduced freshwater inflows into the Bay-Delta shift the size and location of the ecologically important salinity mixing zone, affecting everything from plankton to marine mammals. Between 1975 and 2014, upstream diversions captured so much of the runoff that the Bay experienced supercritically-dry conditions in 19 years. The Delta is in a state of perennial drought. Reduced flows harm salmon, steelhead, and other native fish by raising water temperatures, limiting habitat extent, and quality for spawning, restricting fish passage, and reducing food production. Salmon are a keystone species providing food for other animals and transporting nutrients from the ocean to upland habitats. More than 100 species depend on salmon. Low freshwater flows cause toxic algae blooms in a Delta that can kill pets and wildlife and make people sick. Underserved Delta communities suffer the most. Eighty percent of the water used in California goes to agriculture. There are tremendous opportunities to deliver irrigation water more efficiently.	

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		The State Water Board should reject the proposed VAs because they would maintain a failed status quo. Massive diversions and water exports are driving species to extinction, causing toxic algae blooms, destroying the fishing industry, and impacting tribal and cultural uses of water. The Board should proceed expeditiously with adoption and implementation of the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan, including strong new science-based protections that require increased flows of at least 55 percent in Central Valley rivers in the most years. Thank you – WOODBIDGE: -- very much for your time. I appreciate it.	
1554	1	HYLAND: Hello, hello, hello. HYLAND: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair and Board members. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm here as someone who depends on the Tuolumne River for drinking water, and as a Californian who cares about the future of our rivers. Nearly a decade ago, this Board adopted the Bay-Delta Plan, which is based on science and designed to protect water quality, support farming, and prevent the collapse of native fish like salmon. Unfortunately that plan has still not been implemented. Instead the proposed Voluntary Agreements offer little to no real flow improvements, lack scientific support, and largely exempt major water users from enforceable standards, while at the same time shifting costs to taxpayers. To preserve the status quo at a time when salmon fisheries are closed, harmful algal blooms are increasing, and communities and tribes are bearing the consequences of degraded water quality. The Board's responsibility is to uphold the public trust and base decisions on science, not political pressure. I urge you to reject the Voluntary Agreements and fully implement strong, enforceable, science-based flow standards in the Bay-Delta Plan. Thank you for your service and your courage in protecting California's waters.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.
1555	1	KROVOZA: Let's see. Can you hear me? Am I on? KROVOZA: Very good. Thank you very much.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not

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		Chairman and members of the Board, I'm Joe Krovoza. I'm in Davis, California. I've been following the Bay-Delta hearings and back and forth for quite a while, since law school in the early 1990s. I practice law. I was Chair of the Putah Creek Council here in Davis. I was central to negotiating the Putah Creek Accord in 2000, which restored the salmon run on Putah Creek. As you know, Lake Berryessa is the third largest reservoir north of the Delta. There was plenty of water there, and we've done an incredible job to bring the fish back. I also served as the mayor of the City of Davis for four years. I led the period in which we added the Woodland Davis Clean Water Project to the city, so I've been on both sides, the environmental side. I'm also one of the four authors of the main paper on Section 5937 in the UC Davis Law Review that was published in 2012. The point I'd like to make to you as the Board as the policymakers here is to challenge you to think about the balancing that goes on and on and on. In the late 1930s, the legislature said fish below dams must be kept in good condition. That was a response to Shasta Dam going in and the City of Redding being worried that their river, the Sacramento River, was going to be dried up. So that was a balance then, that fish was supposed to be kept in good condition below dams in the Central Valley and throughout the state. But then we balance a little bit more and we say 75 percent of unimpaired flow would be right, and then we say 55 percent of unimpaired flow would be correct. And now we're going even further below that. And what I want to challenge you to do is set a baseline. Set a baseline that once municipalities and ag and everybody knows that they can't go below it, that will then drive the price signals, it'll drive restoration, it'll drive conjunctive use and groundwater. And I've seen that happening. In Davis, we adopted water rates when we put together our new water project to make sure that conservation was paramount, and it's had a dramatic effect. We	raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		also built a project knowing that conjunctive use would be coming so that we could store water in good years in our groundwater. So you've got to set a baseline. And certainly the restoration programs are a tremendous baseline, but that's only the first baseline. There has to be a baseline for water. The other thing I challenge you to think about is how difficult enforcing these Voluntary Agreements are going to be. If you have a baseline plus voluntary things above that or voluntary things that make sure compliance happens, that's okay, but there has to be a firm baseline. Quite frankly, just as a thank you to your staff that's going to have such a challenge managing so many different agreements and situations. Please set a baseline. Make it a baseline that's regulatory. Make it a baseline that's clear to be followed, and make it a baseline that recognizes the Bay-Delta Plan. Thank you very much for all you're doing. Your names are on this decision, and I hope it'll be a great legacy for you. Hopefully this is the beginning of healing the Delta and healing the tremendous great Central Valley ecosystem that is now merely a shadow of its former self. Thank you all very much.	
1556	1	GUERZO: Good afternoon, everyone. GUERZO: No worries. It happens a lot. Good afternoon. My name is Charis Guerzo. I am here to reject the Voluntary Agreements. To share a bit about myself, I was born and raised in Stockton, California, a community which resides along the Delta. I grew up in one of the wealthy neighborhoods of Stockton with access to well-maintained green spaces and tree-lined sidewalks. Neighborhoods similar to mine have this, in addition to privatized access to the Delta. My memories of growing up with our local waterway involved walks on our levees, and once swimming in the Delta. I don't recall a whole lot more than that apart from being hesitant to swim in it because of the shared narrative that the Delta was gross.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		I share this because after graduating from college in Santa Barbara, I thought environmental justice meant buying more sustainably, not using plastic straws, and using reusable water bottles, but when I returned home and became a youth advocate for environmental justice, I quickly learned that EJ was much deeper than that particularly for communities like Stockton. It was also during this time that I admitted to my fellow youth that it was a privilege to have grown up in a neighborhood with a lot of trees, to which one of them quickly responded, it's not a privilege, it's a right. Since then I've been engaged with EJ work in Stockton, particularly South Stockton, which continually faces disproportionate environmental, social, educational, and health impacts. I also recently took a position focused on urban greening. Prior to this, however, I worked with Stockton youth for three years, and a part of my role included taking them on recreational and educational trips on and along the California coast, mostly in the Bay, to reconnect them to our Bay-Delta Estuary. Ultimately we wanted them to return to Stockton with ideas and visions for our relationship with our local environment. These trips also included taking pre-surveys, and when asked about whether they had visited the Stockton Delta, of the 76 youth who completed our pre-surveys, eight had gone more than five times, nine had gone once, and an overwhelming 49 had never gone to the Delta. To further speak on this disconnection, I once asked one of the youth who regularly attended our after-school program if he knew what the Delta was, and he said no. So, I ask you all, what does it mean when almost 65 percent of your youth have never gone to the Delta despite living on it, when nearly 64 percent of youth respond no to whether they feel connected to our local environment, and when all youth ask for is full access to recreate with our waterway? Per the name of your program, is this really a reflection of a healthy river? We don't want to have to travel one or two hours to touch the same water that touches our communities. We deserve a healthy	

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		Delta with regular water flows needed for the health of the ecosystem. We deserve to have full access to a Delta we can swim in on 110-degree days. We deserve to be able to fish, and our local tribes need to be able to feed their communities and hold their ceremonies. It's not a privilege to have a healthy Delta, it's a right. Please reject the Voluntary Agreements and do not approve the Bay-Delta Plan until you co-govern with California tribes and meaningfully partner with EJ communities and groups. Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment.	
1557	1	HELLIWELL: Hello. Can you hear me now? HELLIWELL: Let me bring up my comments, sorry. HELLIWELL: That's not it. Ah. Here we go. Good afternoon, Chair Esquivel and Board members. My name is Vivian Helliwell. My family has owned and operated a commercial fishing boat for 50 years, the fishing vessel Corregidor out of Eureka, California. Harvesting high-quality seafood from your table has been our main source of income, especially king salmon and Dungeness crab. The Sacramento-San Joaquin River system has been a major source of salmon for much of that time, but that resource is no longer available to the economic and cultural benefit of California's coastal communities. As you know we've had no salmon fishing for three consecutive years and that's not voluntary. The Voluntary Agreements proposed in the Bay-Delta Plan update would allow participating water users to substitute habitat projects for the already less than adequate water supply adjusted flows proposed as standards, as detailed in comments by Friends of the River and others. Salmon cannot swim in habitats without adequate cold water. Taking flows away from salmon in dry years is the opposite of a balanced approach on the backs of the salmon, the Delta, and the communities and tribes that rely on them.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project. Also see Common Response 1.5, Trinity River, for a discussion of the Trinity River and Common Response 1.3, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, regarding the VA pathway, including enforceability.

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		The State Board has -- sorry. The State Water Board has an affirmative duty to protect public trust resources such as fish and wildlife below federal dams. Enforceable temperatures and salinity requirements must be lower with science-based flows sufficient for salmon life cycles to function and a 53-degree temperature that doesn't kill juvenile salmon, including on the Trinity River below Lewiston Dam. The Board has no legal authority to delegate these duties to the Bureau of Reclamation. Adopting the Plan as proposed without clear enforcement mechanisms or funding to ensure flow and temperature goals are met will likely mean the end of the critically depleted run of salmon that supported coastal and river communities for decades. Additionally, the proposed plan does not comply with legal protections for the Trinity River and the lower Klamath River, as detailed in comments by Save California Salmon, degrading massive state, federal, and community efforts to recover coastal fall-run Chinook and southern Oregon-California coastal Coho, such recovery being required before a harvestable surplus can be reached. Besides being a fabulous food source for people, salmon are an essential part of the natural ecosystem and an indicator species of the health of California rivers. The Water Board cannot continue to compromise the needs of salmon, or indeed risk losing them entirely, so we are counting on you to take courage and exercise your authority as an independent Board to do the right thing. Not Voluntary Agreements, but enforceable standards. Thank you for your time.	
1558	1	ABBOTT: Thank you for taking me. Thank you very much. It's been a long three days. My name is Lawrence. I'm one of the founders of the City of Lathrop and I'm also a retired wildlife biologist with an emphasis in fisheries management, and because I live in that part of the	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		San Joaquin Valley at the edge of the Delta, I'm also a member of the Yosemite Rivers. And I just wanted to say that I don't envy you guys because you're right in the middle of California's water wars. Everyone's seen shows and learned about the water wars in California. And I don't envy you because as the population keeps growing and – ABBOTT: -- your culture keeps expanding horrifically – ABBOTT: -- and seeing miles and miles of -- can you hear me? ABBOTT: Oh. Yes you can. ABBOTT: Okay. So the needs that you're balancing are, you know, agriculture and cities. Well, agriculture is a special interest group (audio cuts out) it's not that they're really pretty for agriculture. Cities, they can conserve. They can also use less water. Most of California has access to the ocean and that might have to happen if they keep growing at their current rate. But eventually – ABBOTT: Eventually, a gentleman just spoke of a few callers ago where -- oh, it's coming in and out, huh? My apologies. ABBOTT: Okay. Well, I just (audio cuts out) want to say that as a biologist of years and it's in balance, it was in a really good balance. And when the Native Americans discovered this place, they kept that balance going and in abundance that supported life that was unseen and unheard of by Europe (audio cuts out) Europeans that already destroyed everything. It would be a line that we have to draw. Absolutely has. We're almost done taking. There's almost nothing left of natural systems. The other gentleman talking about rearing salmon and putting them in rice field (audio cuts out) a ridiculous situation. It's kind of like trying to design cities for saying we want resilient cities to deal with global warming, but keep using fossil fuels because it makes money, right? It's the same exact thing going on with water. So your legacy absolutely will be there. We need to get rid of, you	

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		know, the Voluntary Agreements and make sure that we never use less than 55 to 65 percent runoff, that we always have at least 55 to 65 percent runoff during drought years, and 75 percent during -- that really has to be your line in the sand because where are you going to stop, you know? Five percent after that? Why stop doing it after the ecosystem's ruined? You can't bring back millions of years worth of evolution. Please, please be logical and fight the power, because I know the power on you is enormous. Fight the power, create a legacy that will make you proud, not one where you say you helped kill the Planet. Thank you. Bye-bye.	
1559	1	HUG: Thank you for your attention. I spoke to you on November 5th at Smile Now Rick (phonetic) recalling acknowledgment from the Chair as a fellow Ranger Rick alum. In November, I was uplifted by the many who voiced support of the Plan and then dismayed when after hearing us you were still considering scientifically unsupported alternatives. When I thought about what I wanted to say today, I wondered if there was anything that will influence you to dismiss unscientific alternatives and implement phase one of the Bay-Delta Plan. I decided to ask you to join me in grieving and more importantly in contemplating how each of us might be adversely affecting others' well-being by relying on pathological defense mechanisms. A dear friend who spoke to you in November hearing at the November hearing is no longer with us. He was intelligent and compassionate, a high school valedictorian with a Stanford mechanical engineering degree who pivoted to ecology shortly after graduating by volunteering with Earth Day 1990 to launch a 36-year public service career. Near the end, I sensed his growing sadness as he watched humans continue to destroy the natural environment. I share his sadness and imagine you feel it too. Pollsters find it rampant in today's youth whose future we	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		continue to steal, and widespread in other age groups. In such situations, we sometimes turn to pathological defense mechanisms. I see evidence for that here. For salmon, flow is habitat. Without sufficient water, floodplains cannot inundate, temperatures cannot stay cool, and fish cannot navigate. Adding floodplain that is dry 90 percent of the year and calling it habitat is denial of physical reality, a pathological defense mechanism. We have no empirical evidence that habitat projects can offset loss of 40 percent of a river's natural flow. The Tuolumne has seen a 90 percent decline in key species over the last decade. By creating a complex governance committee and using adaptive management as a buzzword, the Bay-Delta Plan opponents create a psychological buffer. They can believe they're solving the problem without reducing water diversions. This is delusion, another pathological defense mechanism. The Bay-Delta system is in a state of collapse. In a healthy psychological state, a person sees collapse and changes behavior. By doubling down on business as usual, that has produced this collapse, and proponents of alternatives enter a loop of denial and delusion where the process of planning becomes a substitute for the action of protecting. We are in this process. We can cease our denying delusional behavior and call it out in others. We can provide reason for optimism, reason to live to those who care about protecting nature now so that all may enjoy it in the future. Thank you so much.	
1560	1	PALMER: Thank you so much. I'm on the Board of directors at Zone 7 Water Agency. It's in the East Bay. I'm also an avid kayaker and an open water swimmer. So one of the things that I share with many of the folks here that they're saddened, I'm saddened, by the decline of the Delta and the fish populations. However, due to climate change and population growth, we will never be able to go back to former days, no matter what the level of nostalgia might be. So I am here to speak in support of the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes proposal. In the adoption of the State Water Board's Water	The Staff Report adequately analyzes the environmental impacts of the revised proposed Plan amendments in Section 13.7, Environmental Analysis. See also Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		Quality Control Plan, a flow-only approach would only be litigated for years, whereas the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program could be implemented immediately. The proposed flow-only approach proposes a 55 percent, more or less, unimpaired flows for the Sacramento River and Delta tributaries, and the concept of unimpaired flows does not take into account need for dam storage or diversions. The flow-only proposal would result in an average 28 percent decrease in State Water Project supplies for us at Zone 7. The reduction in state water -- supply of water project water would be greater in dry and below-normal years for about 40 to 45 percent. During drought conditions, my agency, Zone 7, obtains about half of its water from previously stored wet-year water. With unimpaired flows and the reductions in State Water Project water supply, Zone 7 would not be able to store enough wet year water to use during the dry years. The Healthy Rivers and Landscapes will provide substantial new flows for the environment to help recover salmon and other native fish. The Healthy Rivers and Landscapes will create new and restored habitat for fish and wildlife, and funding for the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes will provide significant funds for habitat improvements and water purchase. The Healthy Rivers and Landscapes will include a governance and habitat monitoring framework. I know people are not believing in this, but it with clear metrics and goals to analyze progress and manage adaptively using a collaborative science program that relies upon the latest scientific information from the University of California, USGS, NGOs, and other leading institutions and agencies. The Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program would provide a comprehensive suite of actions to restore an enhanced Delta ecosystem and provide more reliable water supplies for the 25 million people and 8 million acres of farmland dependent on the Delta Watershed and its water supply. Thank you very much.	
1561	1	FAJEAU: Does that work now?	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not

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		FAJEAU: Fantastic. Thanks for coming back to me. I don't have a script. I am a resident of Brentwood, and so literally the Delta is in my backyard. I also grew up in Los Angeles, and so I have a heart for all things California and all things water. My family is many generations of DWP, water and power workers, but I do have a very big concern about just the state of what we're, you know, talking about today and this notion that -- excuse me -- this notion that we're going to rely on these Voluntary Agreements. And we've heard many people that are far more eloquent, far more educated than I am speak today, and I think that it's just really important that folks who are citizens, folks who are neighbors, this is in our backyards, also show up to say that we feel very strongly that we guarantee these unimpaired flows at 55 percent or more, irregardless of whether it's a great season with lots of rain or it's a season where we're experiencing a drought. So I don't really have much more to say, but just wanted to join you and share my voice as a regular citizen. So thank you. FAJEAU: Thank you. Bye-bye.	raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.
1562	1	BRAMLETT: Good afternoon. I'm Katie Bramlett. I am a long-time Bay Area resident who has retired up at the American River confluence in Cool. The American River, as you know, feeds the Sacramento. It feeds our precious Bay-Delta. I want to thank you for the time you've put into this work and for the chance to speak today, and I want to start by saying this plainly: the Bay-Delta Plan needs an update that actually matches what the science has been telling us for years. The rivers and the estuary simply aren't getting enough water to function as living systems. Strong science-based protections mean increased flows, no less than 55 to 65 percent of natural runoff in most years for Central Valley Rivers and the Delta. This is not a radical number, guys. It's what's needed for fish to migrate, for water quality to improve, and for the estuary to have a fighting chance to recover.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		Right now, the system is stuck in an unacceptable status quo. Massive diversions and exports are pushing species toward extinction. We're seeing toxic conditions in the Delta, a fishing industry on the brink, and real harm to tribal, cultural, and community uses of water that have existed, as we've heard today and in recent days for generations. This isn't abstract. It's happening now, and it's happening because flows are too low.	
1562	2	That's why I'm urging the Board to reject the proposed Voluntary Agreements. They don't fix the problem. They lock it in. They preserve the same imbalance that got us here in the first place while calling it progress. From the outside, it looks less like a solution and more like permission to keep doing what isn't working. I also want to be clear about the proposed water supply adjustments to the percent of runoff standard. If those adjustments mean increased flows almost never happen, then the standard doesn't mean much at all. We can't protect rivers on paper while draining them in practice. This Board has a real opportunity and responsibility to set a baseline that puts ecosystem health, clean water, and long-term resilience first. Updating the Bay-Delta Plan with meaningful flow requirements isn't anti-agriculture. It isn't anti-community. It's pro-future. It's about making sure there's still a Delta, still fisheries, still rivers that work for people and wildlife alike. So I'm asking you to lead. Update the Bay-Delta Plan using the best available science. Require flows that actually protect rivers and the estuary. Say no to proposals that maintain the status quo while our ecosystems continue to collapse. Voluntary Agreements equal voluntary extinction. Not on our watch, please. Thank you for listening and for the work you do.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.
1563	1	AVILA: Hi, I'm not sure if I can see you because I'm in my – AVILA: All right.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for information on the Delta Flow Criteria Report and for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific

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		AVILA: Hi, I'm just glad I'm not on the freeway. Hi. My name is Shanyn. AVILA: Yeah, no, I didn't make it to the freeway, so I'm really glad about that. Okay. Hi, my name is Shanyn Avila. I'm your neighbor. I'm everyone's neighbor there. I'm also an Advisory Board member with the Yosemite Rivers Alliance. I'm a non-profit worker, grant writer, and fund development specialist, so I'm a big-time community collaborator, and most importantly I'm a mother to Indigenous children who are of the Tuolumne Me-Wuk tribe. And I'm here because I love them. I love the Delta, the rivers, and the future that depends on them. I grew up and was born in the Bay Area and moved to the mountains, and then I settled in the Central Valley, so I'm really familiar with all of the rivers and their access. So I want to start with something very simple. Stories don't just describe systems, they move through them. For more than 30 years, the story we have told the Bay-Delta is one of compromise and delay, but what that story has produced is not balance, it's loss. Loss of species, loss of cultural practices, loss of clean water, loss of trust, guys. Massive diversions and exports have driven fish toward extinction, fueled toxic algae blooms, collapsed the salmon fishing industry, and harmed tribal and cultural uses of water. These are not unintended side effects. They are predictable outcomes of decisions that prioritize short-term profit over long-term sustainability -- responsibility. Science has been clear for years. In 2010, this Board's own Delta flow criteria report found that 75 percent of unimpaired flow was needed to protect the ecosystem.	environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.
1563	2	Even the 2024 proposal of 55 percent flows was already a compromise, yet the current plan steps backward again, 35 percent in dry years, while proposing Voluntary Agreements that lack enforcement and accountability or scientific justification.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		There is no credible analysis showing these agreements will protect fish, wildlife, or public trust resources. There is no clear mechanism for accountability -- and I know accountability -- when goals are missed, and habitat restoration without sufficient flows is not restoration. It's an empty promise. As a grant writer, you all know that I'm not supposed to make empty promises, right? I want to name something that often goes unspoken. Historically, we have seen this pattern before. In the 19th century, railroad expansion was justified as necessary progress. Financial risk was offloaded to corporations, while long-term costs, land loss, displacement, and environmental damage was borne by the public and by Indigenous communities. Speed and profit were prioritized over equity and stewardship. We are repeating that story now with water, and repetition matters because the stories institutions choose to tell determine who is protected and who is erased. Water is a public trust resource. It belongs to the people of California, including the children who will inherit the consequences of today's decisions. When 80 percent of our water goes to agriculture, often exported by large corporate interests, while ecosystems collapse and undeserved communities suffer, we must ask: who benefits? Who pays? As a mother, I know that stability is what makes possibility visible. As a community member, I know that dignity depends on access to clean water, to culture, to a living river. I urge the Board to reject the Voluntary Agreements and adopt a strong, enforceable Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan with science-based flow protections, and at the least 55 percent. This is a legacy decision. AVILA: Please choose the story that protects life, honors tribal heritage, and leaves our rivers alive for those who come next. Thank you for letting me finish. AVILA: Thank you.	Please see Common Response 1.3, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, regarding the VA pathway, including enforceability.

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1564	1	ELIZABETH: Hi. My name is Mary Elizabeth, a Stocktonian, and I'd like to first thank the following organizations for elevating the need for science-based solutions and advocacy for affected communities: Sierra Club, California Sports Fishing Protection Alliance, Restore the Delta, Center for Biological Diversity, Natural Resources Defense Council, Earth Justice, Save California Salmon, San Francisco Baykeeper, and many more. But these have worked in Stockton or have taught me about problems with business as usual. Climate change is now, and we need to think about the big picture, not just maximizing profits. I live in Stockton and within a mile of the Deepwater Channel near the confluence of the San Joaquin River and the beginning of the Delta. I have provided comments previously, am a registered environmental health specialist, and currently working on Stockton environmental justice, education, and advocacy. I know when conditions change that the water quality in Stockton is affected. Legacy pollution sources continue, and without adequate flows, poor water quality can predominate, resulting in fish advisories, hyacinths (phonetic) and cyanobacteria blooms, which create toxic conditions and are harmful. Even to consider allowing 35 percent flows to maintain upstream diversions is unimaginable and should not be approved. The intense political, economic pressures that have been applied to consider Voluntary Agreements as a solution are evident. I'm not sure how I was selected to work with the group on the concept of water portfolios back in 2019, and conflicts were evident then that remain today. These Voluntary Agreements remind me of the third-party agreements in the CV-SALTS Irrigated Lands Program that have allowed continued groundwater pollution without full characterization of the extent of polluted domestic wells. Targeted enforcement to reduce the source is difficult and not at all transparent. Hiding behind weak Voluntary Agreements that are less than full standard implementation is a mistake, and the people feel the harms. We cannot depend on the regulated	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		community to regulate their own standards. It's an inherent conflict of interest. Please do not accept the preferred alternative. Voluntary Agreements with the backstop for those not participating, which will end up being users without the legal and technical resources to develop Voluntary Agreements. Please begin the process of evaluating and adjusting water rights to allow for adequate flows to reduce cumulative impacts. Do not allow flow requirements below 45 percent in dry years, which will harm downstream users like those in Stockton. Baseline flows must be maintained that are enforceable. Thank you for the opportunity to provide verbal comments remotely and for your efforts to consider the needs of tribal fishing and disadvantaged communities in the Delta, and I appreciate the honor that you have given to each speaker thus far. Thank you.	
1565	1	GONZALVES: Well, thank you for your patience. GONZALVES: I was at the Hudeman Slough today, which I will not be affected by your choices, but I also look at the history of all these agreements, and nothing has happened. My great-great-grandmother was a Larny Indian (phonetic), married one of the generals or lieutenants from the -- one of the lieutenants with the history of the Spanish conquisition of the country. Her name was lost. His name is Manuel Butron (phonetic). So they were married by Unipresera (phonetic) in 1879. Think about what the country was like then. Okay. The other mentions I have is you were talking about the Bay-Delta Quality Control Plan and compromise. You already compromised from going from 65 percent to 45 percent. My third statement is Voluntary Agreements. Voluntary means you can get out of them anytime you want to. The Turlock State Park has been closed for four years. The Turlock Water District should be maintaining that district. So it's lost boating access and camping along the Tuolumne River. I used to camp there, but now it's no longer accessible, and to do a boat trip has become	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project. See also Common Response 1.3, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, regarding the VA pathway, including enforceability.

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		extremely difficult. So beneficial uses should include boating access and river access, which is -- which is not really going on right now, and then when all the districts of the water companies, they have -- they use 20 percent of the water that is used, and they keep complaining about, well, we don't have enough. But obviously the big consumer is the agricultural uses. And I know you can't control uses of water, but beneficial flows through the rivers is essential to the health of our state. Thank you.	
1566	1	AMODIO: Oh. Hang on a second. Yes. Mr. Chairman, you have been exceedingly patient and gracious. I appreciate that. Briefly, over 50 years, I've had the privilege of working to protect and restore some of California's most iconic natural resources, all of which centers on the health of streams and rivers. It began with a string of early successes, including 1970s grassroots leader and expansion of Redwood National Park. Early 1980s, managed successful wild and scenic Tuolumne campaign. Late 1980s, managed successful campaign to create 350,000-acre Smith River National Recreation Area. Like all of you, I went into state service as a gubernatorial appointee in 1991. Most relevant was serving as Governor Wilson's lead on the Bay-Delta Oversight Council, trying to reconcile the differences of ag, urban, and enviros on the dilemma of the Bay-Delta. My winning streak came to a very humbling end. We failed big time. Allow me to suggest three lessons for your consideration from that, and subsequent continuous failures on restoring the ecological health of the Bay-Delta and its tributary rivers. First, since the Racanelli decision in 1986 gave hope and seemingly legal requirements to improve the ecological health of the Bay-Delta and its two major river sources, despite billions of dollars and endless studies, its ecological health has continued to worsen. The public resources are overall more in peril than ever. Second, a sobering perspective on following the science, or more pointedly, failing to act on the science while it can make a	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		difference. At Redwood National Park expansion, however, there was a similar refrain from those profiting from more and more studies while the National Park was made ecologically and aesthetically destroyed. A profile encouraged Dr. Richard Janda of USGS pointedly rebutted the timber industry's seemingly rational argument for taking more time to study before taking action. Dr. Janda noted the science can most definitively document cause and effect only in a postmortem when it is too late to make a difference. Other government profiles encouraged took this to heart and boldly acted to protect the park through politically contentious and expensive expansion. Third, and most importantly, while Pogo was right, we have met the enemy and the enemy is us. Let me respectfully suggest the difference between all who have testified and you on the dais, which is a simple and profound difference. You have the legal authority and responsibility to act on the fact that water, fish, and wildlife are publicly owned resources. Before you make your decision, please have the courage to do the mirror test. Visualize yourselves 20 years from now explaining your decision to the next generation, clearing if you have grandchildren, whether you took the needed bold action to do with the science as well as common sense as more than documented. Our publicly owned rivers in Bay-Delta need more water now. Finally, I asked ChatGPT to compare the health of Montana and California rivers. Unequivocally, deep red Montana is doing environmentally better than California. This saddens and sickens me as I hope it does you. On water resources, California does not live up to its self-proclaimed global leadership on environmental protection. Please act boldly to live up to that claim. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.	
1567	1	SCHROM: Thank you. My name is David Schrom. I live in Palo Alto. I'm a value scientist, someone who applies scientific methods, principles, and findings to questions about what we want and how we can get it, the ends and means of our lives. I've spoken and written to you on several prior occasions about	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		the Bay-Delta Plan. I'm here again today to advocate immediate, uncompromised implementation of Phase 1. I have three thoughts to offer. The first is about what we mean and understand by reasonable in Sections 13000 and 13241. Some use this term to justify the dilution of environmental protections for economic convenience. However reasonable is synonymous with consistent with applicable science. We violate the mandate of reasonable if we ignore the 2010 scientific consensus that salmon require 60 to 75 percent of natural unimpaired flow to thrive. To afford them less, we sacrifice the primary interest of the people of California in protecting public trust resources. Unless a policy is scientifically sufficient to prevent extinction, it is by definition unreasonable. My second thought is about demography. A primary argument for continuing recent levels of water diversions is to support a booming population. Today our population is less than 40 million, nearly 80 percent of 1990 projections, and is flat or shrinking. To plan diversions to satisfy a growing population is anything but reasonable. My third thought is about agriculture. Current intensive agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley is biophysically unsustainable. To grow walnuts, almonds, and pistachios for the world, effectively exporting 95 percent of the public trust water we divert to irrigate them, we're permanently degrading the natural resources that make their cultivation possible. Over-pumping has caused the ground to sink by 30 feet in some areas, forever diminishing aquifer storage capacity. With soil salinization, we've made a quarter million acres unusable and put another million and a half acres at risk. To continue diverting 80 percent of the state's managed water to sustain an industry actively depleting and degrading the aquifers and soil it relies upon is the height of unreasonableness. Implementing phase one is scientifically sound and eminently reasonable. I urge you to prioritize section 13000's total values, tangible and intangible, over the unreasonable claims being made by supporters of narrow interests. Thank you for your consideration.	

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1568	1	GIBERSON: Good evening, this is Meg Giberson, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. I have followed California water policy for years including some years I spent serving as a resource conservation district director here in the San Jose area. I'm concerned about the over diversion of water from an estuary that is in crisis. I'm concerned about substandard water conditions that may continue or worsen under the proposed plan and VAs. This water plan will not stop the toxic algae conditions in the state's northern waterways. It will not improve the health of native and Delta communities. It will not recover the billions of fishery and community dollars lost because of fish and people left without adequate clean fresh water. The plan will not help California to meet its highest clean water goals. Our state does have solutions based on balanced science and technology that can provide adequate water for our needs without sacrificing the health of the Bay-Delta. I urge you to adopt water quality standards for the Bay-Delta that include adequate -- excuse me -- regulatory minimum science and flow based temperature and HABs prevention criteria with adequate monitoring and enforceability. Again it's been a long day, thank you for the opportunity to comment and your patience.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.
1569	1	SUAREZ: Good evening to the Water Board and everyone. I am Dianna Suarez representing Friends of Bear River. I recently sent a letter of complaint directly to the Water Board regarding this process and the Nevada Irrigation District Voluntary Agreement. I wrote to you because I have found the Delta Water Quality Update process to be unresponsive to my previous seven written comments and two verbal comments. Incredibly frustrating to find that well-documented factual statements are completely ignored and not addressed in the documents at all. I have submitted a total of 23 pages of written assertions and evidence in a 41 page slideshow describing the formation of a restored flood plain and wetland habitat directly related to peak	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for information about the development of the VA pathway, and please see Common Response 1.3, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, for information on the enforceability of the VA pathway. Please also see the responses to Comment Letters 915, 919, 1005, and 1056.

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		and pulse flows on the Bear River when the dams spill. These documents contain a whole lot of information, enough information that should have had some impact on the Bear River, Yuba River, and Auburn Ravine NID Voluntary Agreement. Unfortunately, this is not the case and upon reading the latest December 2025 revision, the problem with the quote redirection of Bear River spill water remains. I feel disappointed, disheartened, and cynical about this process and the validity of the outcome. There are myriad problems with the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Voluntary Agreements which I have documented in my written and verbal comments. There is one especially egregious component in the B.1.16 Bear River, Yuba River, and Auburn Ravine NID Voluntary Agreement Component 1 that appears to violate flow accounting protocols, delegated authority for water diversion, water rights law, and science-based analysis. Despite substantial information to the contrary, the seemingly unilateral decision to quote redirect Bear River spill water remains a component of the agreement. California water law does not recognize redirection as a category distinct from diversion and inter-basin transfer. I wrote to you directly because I am convinced that the process is flawed and all my work has been completely disregarded or likely not read at all. I hope you read my letter. The first I heard of this VA was from the NID lawyer telling the NID Board about the VA plan. He never said where it came from. There was no transparency or opportunity to comment. In response to my first verbal comment back in December of 2024, you said, quote, there is a lack of trust, unquote. Here is one reason and an opportunity. Please initiate removal of Component 1 from the VA B.1.16 Bear River, Yuba River, and Auburn Ravine NID Voluntary Agreement. Thank you. SUAREZ: Thank you.	

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1570	1	OLAERTS: Hi, everyone. Can you hear me? OLAERTS: Yeah, no, thank you. And I might be a little bit repetitive, but bear with me. Thank you. I know it has been a very long couple of days. My name is Lis. I'm here today because the Bay-Delta and the rivers that fed it are not strangers to me. They're places I know, work in, and care for. I live and work in the Sierra Nevada, where snow melt becomes rivers, and rivers eventually become the Delta. Before working in the Sierra, I worked in the San Joaquin Valley on groundwater sustainability. My background is environmental engineering, and I have spent the past eight years working with communities, tribes, and conservation groups on water issues across California. The Bay-Delta Plan has not been fully updated in over 30 years. In that time we have watched salmon populations collapse, toxic algal blooms increase, fishing seasons shut down, and tribal and cultural uses of water pushed to the margins. These are not unintended or unexpected consequences. They're the predictable outcome of taking too much water out of the system. The site has been cleared for more than a decade. In 2010, this Board found that roughly 75 percent of flow would be needed to protect the Bay-Delta. More recently, the Board proposed 55 as a minimum protective standard. But the current proposal steps backward, allowing flows as low as 35 in dry years, and relying on Voluntary Agreements that lack enforceable standards, accountability, or scientific analysis showing they will actually improve conditions.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project. See the Scientific Basis Report Supplement (Staff Report Appendix G2) for the scientific basis for the VA pathway and Common Response 1.3, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, for information on the VA pathway, including enforceability.
1570	2	We cannot repeat with our rivers the mistakes made in groundwater management, where unchecked pumping caused habitat loss, permanent land subsidence, and communities to be left without safe drinking water. Habitat restoration is important but without water habitat is just dirt. Flow is the foundation that everything else depends on. The Voluntary Agreements were negotiated behind closed doors, excluding tribes and the people most impacted by declining	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for information on the VA development process and for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		water quality. They will largely preserve the status quo, massive diversions, weak enforcement, and public dollars subsidizing private water use, only for taxpayers to later pay again to address the damage left behind. Why did we even pass a \$10 billion climate bond if we continue to avoid the water protections needed to make those investments work? That is not consistent with the principle of beneficiary pays and is not consistent with the state's duty as trustee of California waters. I want to emphasize this: healthy rivers are not a luxury. They are the lifeblood of this state. I urge the Board to reject the proposed Voluntary Agreements and move forward with a science-based plan that requires meaningful flow protections and real accountability. Please protect the water, and thank you so much for the time, for the opportunity to comment.	
1571	1	BAILEY: Hello there members of the Board. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. I assume you're hearing me now. BAILEY: Okay. And my name is Gary Bailey. I'm a long-time resident of Sunnyvale, California, a retired electronic engineer with a career designing high-tech electronic products, so science is important to me as it should be to everybody. But also I was co-founder and long-time Board Chairman of a non-profit called the Stevens and Permanente Creeks Watershed Council with thousands of volunteer hours per year monitoring water quality, implementing restoration projects. We even checked -- examined the critters and bugs under the rocks in the streams just because, as you might know, that the kinds of critters there is a measure of water -- not a measure, but an indication of water quality. And so the health of rivers, streams, and bodies of water is important to me, especially here in Northern California, including the Delta. And as we've heard time and again, including from some experts, that these Voluntary Agreements will not improve or even	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		maintain the quality of the Delta but will degrade it and damage the quality. So the Voluntary Agreements must be rejected, as you've heard time and time again, including from some other scientific experts. And in your quest to provide beneficial uses of the waters of the Delta, among other places, let's remember that those beneficial uses should be for everyone, not just for some, and I'm afraid that we might be heading toward just for some. So they should be for all the residents around the Delta, also the human residents, with economic benefits from recreation and the like, for the fish and wildlife. And as you've heard from experts, scientists show that anything less than the compromised 55 percent flow all the way through the Delta into the Bay is just not acceptable, not acceptable. So, I'm hoping that you will leave a lasting legacy of a healthier and healthier Delta and Bay, with a strong plan, with strong regulations, and strong enforcement provisions, and that those enforcement provisions will be used when necessary. And as we know, sea level is going to continue to rise. We know that. And so there's going to be more and more threat of salinity moving in. And if the flow from the Delta to the Bay is not enough, the salinity will move farther and farther. And so thank you for listening and good luck.	
1572	1	WILLIAMSON: Hello. I'm Barbara Williamson. I live in Albany, California. I want to talk about several different groups that I participate in that are very much involved with the water. Bay Area Sea Kayakers has 800 members, and with that group, which I've belonged to for about 20 years, we've gotten involved with completing the Bay Water Trail. We participate in getting Point Molate to be a park. We got kayak access at Point Pinole. And we've gone down and testified at the Coastal Commission when they were planning for the Albany Bulb. Another organization is Environmental Traveling Companions. I	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		do that on a weekly basis for 10 years now when it goes from the spring through the late fall. We provide kayak experiences for the handicapped, urban children, people living in shelters and living in the Palo Alto VA Rehab Program. All these people, we get them out on the water. The other one is the Seashore Nature Center at the Berkeley Marina where we provide schoolchildren from Berkeley and everywhere with programs about fish, about birds, about the marine environment, and the tidal environment. We teach them how to use microscopes and binoculars and all of these things. During the course of my activities with all these places, I have seen that the birds have greatly decreased. I understand that last year's bird count was 30 percent of the prior year's bird count. I see more frequent algae blooms, which means you certainly don't want to have contact with the water. You don't want to fall in the water. You don't want to be around that water. And then these limited amount of flow coming through the rivers and streams that I have paddled in has caused those to become inaccessible to kayaks. Lots of programs that have had water activities, like the one at the San Pablo Reservoir, which I used to go to weekly, have eliminated paddling due to the invasion of the orange mussels. Basically I see in the near future no birds and no fish where I go. I think it's a disheartening thing to think that the current level of water going through to the Bay is so low that it cannot maintain the biodiversity that we rely on. I have been recently going paddling in the Delta at Big Break with the East Bay Regional Parks has a kayak program about five times a month. I've been going out there and it got me interested in the Delta, which led me to this program and concern and interest. I will try to do what I can to activate all the people I know to send you further comments, and I know environmental engineers. I hope to mobilize quite a bunch of people to provide further voices in this issue.	

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		Certainly the Voluntary Agreements sound like a nightmare and that it should be rejected out of hand. We're killing the Bay now. We have to stop that and move in the other direction. Thank you very much for your time.	
1573	1	BENNETT: Hello. Can you hear me? BENNETT: Hi. I'm Keith Bennett and I'm a resident of Palo Alto. My interest in the Bay-Delta Plan comes from my belief that a healthy environment is a prerequisite for a healthy society and individual health. I don't need a scientific study to know that the Bay-Delta health has precipitously declined. Twenty years ago, I bought fresh California salmon every summer at the local supermarket for \$2.99 a pound. For the last three years, it hasn't even been available at any price. That's the proverbial canary in the coal mine. Now that you have some insight into my motivation for speaking, let me pivot to another topic: Voluntary Agreements. About 10 years ago during that extended drought in California, contractors were pumping millions of gallons of water per house for the construction of basements in residential homes. It was obvious to me that in addition to wasting the groundwater, this caused the ground to subside, causing homes including mine to be damaged amongst other impacts. Of course the contractors claimed it wasn't their fault or responsibility, and simply asking contractors to voluntarily use other construction methods such as best practices to construct basements didn't work. So I organized Save Palo Alto's Groundwater to effect city regulations. After several years, we had some success. While some of the regulations are prescriptive, some are voluntary recommendations to use best practices. While some contractors do follow these recommendations, others do whatever is most convenient or profitable to them. Voluntary Agreements are just that -- voluntary -- unless they have clear, enforceable performance metrics. All of the studies show that minimum flows, especially at critical times, are required to maintain the	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		health of the environment, and I request the Board's actions to fully embrace and reflect this. The California Water Board has an important role in managing one of California's most important and valuable and critical resources, and it's also a big responsibility for the members. I'm sure it's difficult for you. Thank you for your efforts.	
1574	1	EL: Hello. Can you hear me? EL: Hi. Thank you. My name is Kyne Fall-El. I'm a resident of the west side of L.A. This is my first time making a public comment like this, so please bear with me through my statement. I am a myth dreamed up by my ancestors, as Sun Ra would say, and today I am speaking as a future ancestor of this planet for the water, the wildlife, Indigenous communities, and the children who will inherit the consequence of what we decide now. I grew up near the Ballona Wetlands in Playa Del Rey, where protecting water and wildlife was a lived responsibility, and as an artist, I have drawn lifelong inspiration from estuary ecosystems. Estuaries teach symbiosis. They teach balance and interdependence between land, water, animals, and people. And that is why I urge the Board to reject the proposed Voluntary Agreements. They maintain a failed status quo of massive diversions that are driving salmon toward extinction and harming tribal, cultural, and ecological systems, without any scientific analysis showing that they will meaningfully protect fish or public resource. Decisions must be based on science and not pressure, political pressure, which means moving forward with the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan and enforceable protections. Without sufficient water, habitat restoration becomes an empty promise. It has taken a hundred years for the Bay-Delta to be depleted to what it is today. A hundred years from now, people will look back at this moment and ask whether we chose short-term convenience or long-term sustainability, and I just want to say	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		thank you in advance from the future for doing the right thing. Thank you.	
1575	1	EVERTS: Thank you very much, Conor Everts. This is not my first, but it may be my last time speaking. It's been a long -- actually kind of a wonderful day hearing all of the speakers, and I was so impressed by hearing the tribal Indigenous members, especially the youth. But I mean, we have to realize a lot of things here. There's a lot of assumptions that have gone on, and we've heard from people all over the state, which I'm really impressed with, because I represent the Environmental Water Caucus, which is a statewide group that has come up with solutions on the Bay-Delta, many of which have been enacted, which has allowed urban California to decrease water use with greater population. That's one of the myths. The other myth is that voluntary works. We seem to have a voluntary disagreement from hearing the number of people that have challenged the speculative at best process. I know from years of doing water conservation work that when we have mandatory regulations, the water agencies offer incentives, people listen, and we continue on a downward trend of being more efficient and doing more with less. Also living in Southern California, it's often thought that we are one in a desert. We're not. We're a semi-arid area. We've had a lot of rain this year. We capture a lot of rain. We're capturing more rain on larger scales. Our library catches 200,000 gallons. The Tree People's parking lot costs 250,000 gallons underneath their parking lot. There are a lot of things that are going on on smaller and larger scales to make us more self-sufficient locally. Our city actually has a plan to be self-sufficient in imported water. That is the future with the extremes of climate change we are experiencing from both extreme wet, as we've had two great deluges. to no rain at all in January. We should be planning for the driest day plus fire. We should not expect fisheries, which have been in great decline since 1971, or an estuary, to work better with less water. We have to maintain flows for all the fish	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		and the ecosystems and not rely on terrestrial habitat changes after the fact. I think that's been made clear. I want to thank you for the opportunity, your patience, and for all the panels you've had that have spoken over this time. It seems now like a long time ago when we came prepared to discuss this, and we were kind of caught by surprise with the idea of these so-called Voluntary Agreements. The job is to regulate. Regulations make things happen. There's a reason for them. We're seeing an undoing in this country of so many successful regulations like the Clean Water Act and Endangered Species. We should not add ourselves to that list. Thank you very much.	
1576	1	WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My name is Charley Wilson. I'm the Executive Director of the Southern California Water Coalition, and on behalf of the more than 24 million of California's 40 million residents and water consumers, we are participating today to support the completion of the updated Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan, including the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Proposal. I also, like you pointed out earlier in the day, want to acknowledge and thank the Board staff for the extensive scientific analysis, stakeholder outreach, and community engagement that shaped the recommendations under consideration. In addition to being science-based, recent events in the last couple of years, as Conner actually just pointed out, make it clear to us that California's water quality and water management framework must be highly flexible. Extreme hydrologic swings, climate-driven impacts, and real-world operational challenges require policies that cannot adapt quickly -- that need to adapt quickly to rapidly changing conditions on the ground. Healthy rivers and landscapes are essential, and achieving those goals must be balanced with drinking water reliability, groundwater recharge, flood protection, agriculture, and the	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		affordability for the communities that we serve. Flexibility, regional implementation, and coordination with local and regional agencies has demonstrated to be successful, and we think is the key to the future. Chairman, you pointed out earlier, real-world problems and balancing is hard. The fact that California is big and diverse is both a blessing and a curse, and you're finding out that over three days of these hearings. We encourage the Board to move forward with a final plan that both balances, protects ecosystems, while also ensuring California's water system remains resilient, reliable, and adaptable for the future. Thank you very much for your leadership, and thank you for the opportunity to comment this afternoon.	
1577	1	CHENG: Good afternoon, Chair Esquivel and the rest of the Board. Thank you very much for hearing my comments. My name is Robert Cheng. I'm the Assistant General Manager for the Coachella Valley Water District out in Coachella Valley, California, and we would like to thank the state Board's hard work and your incredible resolve in trying to carefully craft the best path forward for the future Bay-Delta Plan, and we strongly urge the adoption of the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program as revised by State Water Contractors' comments in the very near future provides certainty for the varying interests that rely on this critical resource. Water has always been a central focus of public attention, and rightfully so due to imbalance between supply and demand, which has been exacerbated by the climate change. We're not really able to impact supply side in any significant way, and we believe that the rational way to resolve this imbalance issue is find a balance between human and environmental needs. Many peer-reviewed scientific studies have been conducted since the current plan was implemented that offers alternatives to flow-based only actions for enhancing survival of vulnerable species, which we're all very concerned about. The HRL incorporates this knowledge into the data plan, including habitat creation and strategic flow releases as alternative management methods to purely flow actions.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		Our agency is one of only two California agencies that have access to both Colorado River and the State Water Project. The impacts of an unimpeded flow alternative will cause additional significant State Water Project supply reductions on top of existing reductions that we're already experiencing due to other restrictions. We have the very likelihood of significant reductions on Colorado River supply for the next 20 years, and this total reduction could impact us to the tune about one-sixth of our total water supplies. We certainly are big advocates of conservation, but these are volumes way too large for Coachella Valley Water District to conserve our way out of. In order to comply with SGMA standards, we would have to secure other more costly replacement water, which will also compound affordability issues in the valley for some customers, especially ones in disadvantaged communities in our service area. The HRL program provides a balanced approach to 21st century water management is ready to be implemented. We firmly support the HRL program because it aligns with the multiple goals that we've heard of today and over the course of the last two days, and for these reasons, we need this program to be implemented as soon as possible, and we respectfully request that your Board considers this -- your upcoming deliberations. Thank you.	
1578	1	JOBSON: My name is Brian Jobson. I represent the Foothill Conservancy, a small non-profit group protecting our watersheds of the Mokelumne and Cosumnes River. I'm concerned about the degradation of the Bay-Delta, its tributaries, and their water quality and fisheries. My career in the water and power field includes employment from the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Water Rights, Environmental Analysis, and Adjudication Sections, and for the Bureau of Reclamation and Environmental Analysis of CVP Operation and Maintenance. I also completed my graduate work in water science at UC Davis.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project. Also see Common Response 1.3, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, for information on the VA pathway, including enforceability.

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		The proposed Voluntary Agreements described in the Staff Report appear to be a temporary, unenforceable collection of sporadic habitat measures and speculative water purchases. They are proposed largely to substitute for the more difficult but mandated Board duty to promulgate comprehensive water quality standards for the Bay-Delta and science-based conditions on diversions from its tributary rivers. These are needed to protect in-stream beneficial uses and recover their degraded fisheries. The Board has delayed its duty for years. The current governor and his political operations have complicated this process significantly, but the Board should not further delay its obligation to protect these public trust resources of the State of California with clear, durable, enforceable water quality standards, diversion conditions, and release requirements. It may well be that applying one uniform percentage of unimpaired flow to all reaches of all tributaries may be problematic. These rivers have different existing geomorphology, riparian habitat, human disturbances, places and purposes of use for existing water rights, and many other constraints and opportunities. Each major river should have required flows and limits on diversion established based on science and on balancing of beneficial uses. That's been the Board's job for decades since I worked there. Please do it.	
1578	2	Another point I want to make is that the Friant Dam in its diversion should not be treated like a third-party east-side stream with a Voluntary Agreement. Friant is an integrated facility in the Central Valley Project owned by the Bureau of Reclamation. This diversion of San Joaquin River to storage, and that's to the Friant-Kern-Madera canals, drive the need for pumping at Tracy, deliveries to Mendota Pool, reverse flows in the Old and Middle River, and ultimately releases to the Sacramento River and the Delta from Lake Shasta. Friant's diversion and releases impact not just the lower San Joaquin River but the entire Delta dramatically. Friant diversion should be reviewed and conditions considered in this proceeding to better reduce its impact on the Delta and its fisheries.	The Friant VA is included as a voluntary contribution to Delta Outflow under the VA pathway. The water rights for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Friant Division are not listed as HRL water rights in Appendix B because water rights on the San Joaquin River are not included under the Sacramento/Delta Update to the Bay-Delta Plan. The inclusion of the Friant HRL flow contributions in the VA pathway does not constitute compliance with the Bay-Delta Plan or prevent the Board from considering Bay-Delta requirements for the upper San Joaquin River in the future. Please see Common Response 1.3, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, for information on the VA pathway.
1578	3	Finally, I'm concerned that we are facing a third and fatal blow to our Delta. First being the Central Valley Project construction in	Section 7.23.1, Cumulative Impact Analysis, of the 2023 draft Staff Report and Section 13.7.21.1, Cumulative Impact Analysis,

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		the 40s and 50s, the second being the State Water Project constructed in the 60s, and now the proposed Delta Conveyance Project, revised Delta Plan, and Sites Reservoir, all culminating at the same time. Cumulative environmental impacts of these actions is required by law. The Delta Conveyance Project is also a state-proposed action affecting the same geographical area over the same period of time affecting the same environmental resources. Please do that cumulative analysis to comply with the law. Thank you very much.	of the 2025 partially recirculated draft Staff Report address cumulative impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Please refer to Common Response 7.23, Cumulative Impact Analysis, for responses to comments related to the consideration and analysis of cumulative impacts associated with the Delta Conveyance Project and Sites Reservoir.
1579	1	MIGUEL: Oh, perfect. Sorry. Is that working? MIGUEL: Perfect. No, thank you. Good evening, everyone. My name is Miguel. I'm a leader in urban planning and environmental policy. I'm actually calling today from the City of Los Angeles where I myself grew up in a disadvantaged community right next to urban waterways of the Los Angeles River. For us, those waterways were places of play. They were places where kids and families gathered, and where we learned to love being outdoors, but unfortunately also learned firsthand what pollution does to your health. We saw warning signs go up. We saw people get sick. We learned very quickly that when water is treated as disposable, communities like mine, unfortunately, pay the price. So when I speak today about water policy, I'm speaking from lived experience and not theory. I speak with urgency as this conversation has put eyes on you all, all the way down from Southern California, as recently shown by the coverage in the L.A. Times. Growing up we were taught that being a good neighbor means putting self-interest aside so the whole community can thrive. It means making choices that protect people, even though we have never met. We heard lots about balance, but ask yourselves who has been paying the price of unbalanced policies in the name of	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project. Also see Common Response 1.3, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, for information on the VA pathway, including enforceability.

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		large profit interest. We depend on the Bay-Delta, but not in the way that you think. We depend on it for the value it provides to its communities and its biology, to tribal nations, to families, and to the ecosystems that sustain this entire system. The Bay-Delta should not be mistreated just to make up for water demands in large urban areas like the ones many of us live in, because sacrificing the Delta does nothing to improve affordability or access for our communities. It does not make water cheaper, it does not make it more equitable, and it only shifts the burden onto Northern California communities and fragile ecosystems and rewards irresponsible water users further pushing demand to the brink. That is not sustainability, nor is it fairness, and it is not being a good neighbor. You have heard countless comments and you hear them with the lens of why should I care if I'm not the one suffering. If we truly care about environmental justice and public health in our decisions today, we must ensure that children in Northern California can grow up with safe, healthy waterways and places of play and not places of warning signs. That is why this Board must adopt a science-backed enforceable regulatory pathway that does not rely on Voluntary Agreements and that guarantees unimpaired flows of at least 55 percent or more in the Sacramento River and its tributaries. Voluntary Agreements are not enough. Communities like the one I grew up in cannot depend on uncertainty, and we need clear standards and real protections. I learned growing up that water teaches us how connected we are, and what happens upstream also shows up downstream. So what we decide today will shape who thrives tomorrow, and during COP30, may I remind everyone that California's governor himself has criticized their take on the climate crisis from the federal government as an abomination, and such we cannot become what we criticize. So I urge you to choose responsibility over convenience and to choose science over uncertainty. Thank you.	

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1580	1	ELLIOTT: Hello. Thank you, Chair Esquivel and fellow Board members for showing such respectful attention to so many speakers over three days. Chair Esquivel, I've been really moved by your kindness and patience. It offers me hope that our voices are being heard and also heeded. My name is Claire Elliott. I'm a retired water quality engineer and ecologist on the San Francisco Peninsula, and I've spent over 40 years working to protect and enhance both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. It's often challenging to know what factors limit ecosystem health. However regardless if a habitat has the right sun exposure, the right type of placement of soil and plants and water of good quality, if there is insufficient water, ecosystem health is impaired, sometimes irreversibly. Aside from working to protect and enhance ecosystems, I've also been an educator and have been so encouraged by the participation of young people at this hearing. One of my favorite environmental education activities is Save the Bay's Watershed in Your Hands curriculum, where students model the watershed of the Bay-Delta using their cupped hands with the space between their wrists representing the Delta and their lifelines representing the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, the space between their fingers, the tributaries to these rivers. I have led this activity and even have been told 25 years later by parents involved that they learned a lot about watersheds for the first time and have kept that memory. I myself was surprised to learn during that activity that the Bay-Delta Watershed represents 40 percent of the state, the landmass, so it's particularly important to be protecting that area and the drainages. While regulations are being eliminated at the federal level, it's particularly important you use your regulatory authority to enforce adequate flows in the streams and rivers that drain that huge percentage of California and not merely rely on volunteer agreements to support these resources. Thank you very much for your time and efforts working for California water and the life that it supports.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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1581	1	COLONNA: (Indiscernible.) COLONNA: Can you hear me okay, guys? Can you hear me all right? COLONNA: All right. Thanks for sticking around to hear me and the other people who are still left on this list. As you know my name is Andy Colonna, former commercial fisher and now a member of the California Sport Fishing Protection Alliance. I'm also Vivian Helliwell's alternate on the California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead, advising the legislature and the Resources Agency on critical salmon-related issues with the best scientific and commercial information we can bring to the table. So I'd like to start with my observation about this Plan and my conclusion about it, and then some recommendations, if you don't mind. Observation. The proposed Bay-Delta Plan update, with all its good intentions, has one problem: it is not being updated in a way that meets its legal mandate to protect beneficial uses. Conclusion. Unless and until it is updated with protective standards implemented and monitored over time, no one can be sure that it has any chance of accomplishing the goals which it claims to represent in the public and the private interest. In evaluating these concerns, it seems that it's important to bear in mind that each beneficial use of water listed in Article 10, Section 2 of the California Constitution, such as navigation, commerce, fishing, etc., has a public and a private benefit, and that no one value should be sacrificed for short-term private gain by a few at the expense of long-term socioeconomic cohesion and prosperity for the rest of us. Meanwhile, commercial, sport, and subsistent fishing, as well as tribal beneficial uses of water, are heading towards extinction at this point in time, and will get there sooner than later if we don't wake up and do the right things now to prevent further collapse of the ecosystem in the Bay-Delta. Whether or not this will be our collective legacy will depend on what happens in the next	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		few years based on what the Board requires when it completes its Bay-Delta Plan updates. Also meanwhile, the rug is moving under salmon recovery enemy on California. On June 4, 2025, Seafood Source News announced, quote, U.S. President Donald Trump has proposed eliminating funds for Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, a program that directs tens of millions of dollars annually towards supporting salmon populations along the West Coast, from Alaska to Mexico. The cut is part of the Trump administration's planned cuts to NOAA's overall budget. Now additional budget documentation released by the federal government shows which programs will be impacted by that cut, and salmon recovery efforts are one of the major government programs on the chopping block. So why should anyone believe that the Trump administration will provide funding for the salmon recovery efforts for the Voluntary Agreements when its efforts to eliminate salmon recovery funding are so obvious and so destructive of the salmon resource? As we see it, there's a clear and present danger that in this current political climate that these efforts may succeed. So as an antidote, wouldn't it be wise to apply CDF Director Jerry Partain's sound advice? In his forward to the 1985 edition of the California Forest Practice Rules to managing all of California's natural resources: quote, the goal of modern forestry is to manage the resource so that its benefits will continue undiminished for all future generations. One more point, please. COLONNA: This requires the consideration not only of forestry in a traditional sense, but also of fisheries and wildlife, watershed protection, aesthetics, and recreation potentials. One final point, based on a comment I heard by John Amadio, and that is the Racanelli decision. If you look under that, look it up, you'll find that it's entitled the United States versus the California State Water Board because of its failure at that time in 1986 to do the right thing. And so it seems to me that you're at	

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		the same place in time of a decision that may end up having another resurgence of Racanelli on your lap. I hope that doesn't have to come to that. So thank you very much for hearing me.	
1582	1	JACKSON: Hi. Yeah. I was just trying to turn my video on. Thank you. Thanks so much. Thanks, everybody. I just wanted to say, I'll make it quick. I am here to plead with the Water Board and Governor Newsom to support the public trust, the people of California, and to reject the corporate ag interests. I see the corporate ag interest as the one percent here at the expense of 90 percent of the environment. So we may be the fourth largest economy in the world, but it certainly seems to be at the expense of Californians and our environment, and that includes exports to the rest of the country in terms of our farm produce. I live in Fair Oaks, along the American River. I'm a fifth generation Californian, a pioneer on my father's side. Since 1845, my great-grandmother moved to Los Angeles when it was Pueblo de la Reina de la Puerta de Los Angeles, and 8,000 people lived there when the L.A. River flowed freely. And my mom, fourth generation San Franciscan, built the first barn in San Mateo County in 1854, Cow Palace, Sherry Ranch Dairy Farm (phonetic). The family has been rebuilding, recreating, and restoring the ecosystems in California for over 170 years. I'd like to focus on the solutions. First one, remove the Voluntary Agreements, reject them, restore flows. A couple ideas. Restore Hetch Hetchy. We can have that valley returned to the Yosemite Miwok. There's plenty of storage at Don Pedro. Let that river flow. Plant drought-tolerant crops. Perhaps we can remove water-hungry almonds and cotton for things like, you know, maybe	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		more family farms. Pomegranates, much more drought-tolerant. I have three in my backyard. I never water them. What I'd like to advocate for is perhaps a one percent for the planet model, where if ag, if you're doing exports, they pay a tax if they're going to export outside of California. Those exports are going to make them money, and so they can certainly afford to pay a water tax for the water that they use, or perhaps have tiered pricing where the ag producers receive -- pay more for their water, like in places like East Bay Mud, where if you use over a certain amount of water, you are in a different sliding scale. You pay more than people who conserve. I guess the last thing I wanted to say is we have a 100-year-old legacy back to the 1930s of these last-century agreements that are antiquated, and they're 30 years old, haven't been looked at since 1995. This is the 21st century, and I think we really need to start looking out for Californians and 40 million people. That's where my heart is. I've seen what happens to the American River when we have a flow, and the salmon, what a difference it makes. And this is my first time speaking, and I wanted to let you know that I appreciate everything you're doing. I was there earlier today planning to speak in-person, but I had to get back to work, and so I'm still here at home. So thank you. I appreciate us having the right to make our views known, and I really hope that all our comments are going to make a difference. Thank you.	
1583	1	PEREZ: Hello? (Pause) PEREZ: Hello? PEREZ: Oh, thank you. My name is Leif Perez. PEREZ: I live in Chico, California. Thank you so much for taking	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		your time to hear me. This is the first time I've ever spoken in a public forum like this. I would just like to say the voluntary -- there's so many people that have spoken before me, scientists so intelligent that know what they're talking about. I'm a whitewater river guide who worked in the 80s in California, and now I'm a sailor. I'm a lake sailor, and we just need to take care of the water that we have for our future generations, the children. I take children sailing. And we need to protect our water for the salmon, just as everyone is saying. So I trust you all to do the best you can do. Yeah, thank you so much for listening, and I just want to make that point. Yes. The agribusiness takes 80 percent of our water here in California, and I think that we need to protect our environment, or we will become, as one of the previous speakers said, like the Colorado River. That's it. That's all I need to say. Thank you so much. Thank you for taking the time to listen to me. PEREZ: Yes. PEREZ: Yes. PEREZ: Thank you, and I appreciate your service, and thank you. Let's protect our California water. Thank you so much.	
1584	1	HETHERINGTON: Hello, Water Board and Mr. Chairman. I appreciate so much your patience and staying so late, and especially to the Chair, that you really seem to hear what people are saying and acknowledge people's voices. I really appreciate that so much. I will be quick. I am just an ordinary citizen. I am not articulate like so many that have spoken before me, but everything that I've heard really resonates with my desires for you to reject the Voluntary Agreements. It seems very clear from the evidence that's been presented, and I, as an old river guide, as a current	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		volunteer with Team River Runner who teaches whitewater kayaking skills to veterans, and as just an environmentalist, I feel so deeply that we really need to preserve what we do have left because I'm witnessing species extinction in my lifetime. It's incredible to me when I grew up in a time of such abundance and such delight in the environment. I hope that you will consider the legacy that will be left by doing the correct thing in rejecting these Voluntary Agreements and adopting the Bay-Delta Quality Control Plan. Thank you so much for your time and for staying late.	
1585	1	DEPOLO: Yes, hi. Can you hear me? DEPOLO: Thank you. Thank you. I really appreciate that everyone is still here today. I am just -- first of all want to say I'm zooming in from San Francisco, an unceded territory of the Ramaytush Ohlone Native people, and I think that's quite significant, and I was most impressed with the patience, the grace, and the composure of the Native tribes, especially the youth who have been before this Board so many times. This is not my first time speaking in front of you guys, but their ability to stay calm and be kind was really impressive, so I'm going to do my best to do the same. I'm a graduate of Humboldt State University with a degree in natural resource planning and a former director of the California Endangered Species Coalition, and I'm heartbroken. I'm just heartbroken. I know you guys feel like you're between a rock and a hard place, but I was around in the 1990s when a coalition of these very similar environmental groups, some of them the very same groups, believed in working in coalition with Voluntary Agreements, and we saw back then the disaster that was habitat conservation planning. So it makes it very difficult for folks that have been around for this long to really have patience for this process, and I sure hope that we haven't wasted our time. I know you guys are all doing a great job of being civil, and I think that's important in today's world. It is no accident that this hearing this week is happening at the same time that our democracy is going through a crisis that underscores the need to	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		do exactly what the environmental groups have said and reject the Voluntary Agreements. They're nothing short of a sham at this point, and quite frankly, it's insulting to even have to take up everyone's time, especially when yesterday I heard Board member Laurel Firestone, who I'm sure is very well-intentioned, but she let slip the words, we will adopt when it related to the Voluntary Agreements, even while you guys have said at the outside of this process that you're considering our comments when it's obvious that that's not really what's happening. If you follow the money, it's pretty obvious what's happening. Now, I'm not here to represent any sort of environmental group, but I will say this. I'm here to represent water. Water does not have rights in this whole situation, but water is in each of us, and water has power, and ultimately, the power of water will take us out the same way the power of the environment that is stretched beyond its capacity will. The fact that we've given up 80 percent of the water rights in this state to one business, and very few people have spoken to the next kid on the block who's about to knock all of us out and take up all the rest of the water, water that doesn't exist, which is AI. The building of data centers all over this country and this world are sucking dry resources that don't even exist. Obviously as you've heard from hundreds of us for hour after hour speaking to the need for facts and science-based, real, enforceable mechanisms. We know that we can't count on the Trump administration to honor anything, like the Constitution or anything that is agreed to by prior administrations or this administration. We know that – DEPOLO: Thank you. DEPOLO: I will just wrap up with, it is not enough to have this agreement that cannot be a voluntary, but a real fact, science-based agreement with real regulations, co-governed by the tribes. The tribes have 15,000 years of wisdom. They should be paid for their expertise and allowed to lead a new process that will actually steward the water; the only humans who have ever proven that they're capable of doing so. I thank you for your time today.	

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1586	1	OVERHOUSE: Good evening, Chair Esquivel, Board members. Thanks so much for your time and patience. I'm sorry I could not be there with you this evening. I'm the Water Policy Advisor for Defenders of Wildlife. Thank you for the opportunity to give public comment once again on the most important water planning process for our state. First I want to echo and support the comments that have been made by my partners on great tribal environmental justice, fishing, and conservation panels. I share their deep concerns, both with the proposed Voluntary Agreement pathway, as well as the regulatory pathway modified now by the water supply adjustments. The plan the Board released right before the holidays, in my opinion, is not responsive to serious concerns raised over several years by engaged stakeholders, including Defenders of Wildlife. As of today, the proposed Draft Plan is not only inadequate to protect all uses of California's precious freshwater resources, but deeply -- and inequitable and flawed for a host of reasons, from promoting the Voluntary Agreements to incomplete analysis to weakened regulatory requirements. As hundreds of other speakers have now noted over three days, over 80 percent of the individual public comments given so far are not supportive of this Plan, and neither am I. While we urgently need updated water quality standards, adopting the Plan as drafted is not the best path forward. In fact, in my opinion, it may make the crisis we are facing in the Delta and statewide worse. We are now faced with flawed and deeply inequitable voluntary proposals that capitalize on the Board's unwillingness to impose the necessary regulatory guardrails for our species and communities. Second, I want to respond to the Voluntary Agreement panel that occurred on Wednesday. As they noted, there have been some great restoration projects on Putah Creek and Mokelumne and programs to strengthen protections for aquatic species. However, the examples showcased have, again, one, already been implemented; two, have not produced the watershed-wide and overall population-level benefits that species and the estuary	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		desperately need; and three, were spurred originally by existing regulatory requirements and settlements resulting from litigation. The panel's singular focus on good projects that came about due to enforcement, not voluntary actions, felt like a bait-and-switch. There's a lot of great work that has occurred on tributaries and the Delta, collaboration and progress that is essential, but without enforceable requirements, the true flow needs of our state's rivers and Delta Estuary may never be met.	
1586	2	Finally, I wanted to raise some concerns about how the Board's responding to the changing Central Valley Project and State Water Project operations. I really appreciated Director Nemeth's presentation at the start of Wednesday's hearing. It was illuminating for a number of reasons, but also disturbing with the attempts to justify less Delta outflow at a time when we are frankly facing a volatile and uncertain water future, both in terms of future precipitation this year but also potential lack of compliance with bare minimum state laws like Porter-Cologne. Action 5 is expected to increase Delta exports and decrease Delta outflows compared to the baseline in 2024 project operations. See the new Chapter 13, page 13-405. Essentially, the two water projects that we depend on right now to adhere to Decision 1641, who control a significant portion of water in the state, will allow less freshwater in and through the Delta, something that the Board identified as critical in 2010 for the Bay-Delta Plan update. So after this reveal, it is especially troubling that the Water Board is continuing to promote the Voluntary Agreements instead of sufficient freshwater flows. I was raised on the motto not words but deeds. Blame a Catholic upbringing and throw a bit of guilt in there too. I hope you do not approve this Draft Plan, or at the very least press pause. Otherwise, the words of these documents will let a critically important estuary and consequently communities and listed species continue to decline, and the Board's misguided	Please see Common Response 1.3, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, regarding comments about the 2025 ROD and 2025 ITP. Please refer to Common Response 3.1, Fish Protection, on use of best available science in the Staff Report. Please also see Chapter 13 and Common Response 1.3, Revised Proposed Plan Amendments, for information on the VA pathway.

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		deeds will speak louder than any boards ever could with the economic and environmental devastation they will bring. Thank you for your work, your time, and your leadership.	
1587	1	DELSON: Can you hear me? DELSON: I am honored to be here, and I appreciate the late hour, and I just bring it up my comments. This is my first time speaking, and I've really enjoyed listening to all the other very thoughtful comments, and for the good listening. My name is Beth Delson, and I do have a Master's of Science in Natural Resource Policy Behavior and Management from the School of Natural Resource at the University of Michigan, although I grew up in California, and I did research water rights negotiations and conflict resolution across stakeholder institutions across the nation for my graduate thesis. What I learned from that and all the research that I did was that if we don't involve all the stakeholders in resolving some of these very complex water rights issues, then it becomes very costly for not only the stakeholders, the environment, and society, and things become -- and it's just not the right way to resolve things. The proposed Voluntary Agreements rely on unenforceable promises instead of science-based flow standards needed to restore the environment for the fish and wildlife, and these have already devastated the salmon runs as has been mentioned, forcing cancellation of commercial salmon, and an economic loss and cultural loss for many families that rely on it. Low flows as has been mentioned already fuel toxic algae blooms that also endanger wildlife and people, especially in underserved Delta communities, and protecting the flow is not only good policy, it's our responsibility. As has been mentioned, California's water is a public trust resource, and it belongs to all of us, and the Bay-Delta Plan would spur innovation and make water use more efficient. So policy, again, without hearing the stakeholders, ultimately is expensive, not only for everybody fighting, but not only for the fish and the environment, but ultimately for our society.	Please see Chapter 12, Public Participation, for a summary of public participation activities for the Sacramento/Delta updates to the Bay-Delta Plan. The State Water Board has received valuable input from many interested persons, which has informed the Sacramento/Delta update to the Bay-Delta Plan and will be further considered through the planning process. Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for a discussion about the process to develop the VA pathway.

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		So as I leave this evening, I urge you to take a different approach that encompasses all the stakeholders and not simply those of certain voices with Voluntary Agreements. So thank you very much, and have a good evening, and I look forward to hearing of your good work. DELSON: Thank you.	
1588	1	PAQUIN: Good evening, actually, and thank you, Chair Esquivel and Vice Chair D'Adamo and Board members for hearing all of our comments. My name is Lanie Paquin and I'm with the City of Roseville Environmental Utilities. We're a full-service public utility, including water, wastewater, and recycled water services for our community, and our goal is that these services are of high quality, reliable, and affordable, and we recognize that working collaboratively and with investment in long-term resilience is at the heart of achieving this goal. For over 20 years, water agencies in the American River region have successfully implemented and conducted use, meaning we replenish our aquifer in wet times and use groundwater in dry. Doing so, we alleviate pressures on the lower American River by reducing in-stream diversions. And we've actually increased groundwater levels. Preliminary results from modeling shows that these actions are considerably contributing to increased base flows in the American River, and we've also partnered with the Sacramento Water Forum and provided resources for collaboration, constructing spawning and rearing habitat, collecting data, monitoring conditions, and engaging in breakthrough science. The American River region's Healthy Rivers and Landscapes proposal was developed with an adaptive and impact-oriented mindset. Water contributions for the American River will be provided with an emphasis on ensuring enhanced flows in the driest years, and this will benefit the American River and points downstream in times when the system needs it most. These flow contributions will be provided in balance with upstream reservoir operations and in consideration of continued	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.

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		groundwater sustainability, and they'll also be made in consideration of maintaining cold water for fish and aquatic species when they need it most. The bottom line is that the American River partner water agencies understand the commitments, resources, and cooperation that it takes to achieve success for both a resilient ecosystem and a sustainable water supply. We've been doing it for decades and will continue to because we know it's the right thing to do. So we do urge you to adopt the Healthy Rivers Landscape Program as a preferred approach to reasonably protecting beneficial uses of water. And I thank you all for your leadership and for the opportunity to provide public comment. Thank you and have a great evening.	
1589	1	ATIQR: Hello, can you hear me? ATIQR: Hi, thank you so much for allowing the space. Hi, my name is Shahzad. I work as a youth organizer for Little Manila Rising based in Stockton. I want to first applaud the Board for its efforts in including youth voices, so thank you. The reason I'm providing public comment today is because I feel extremely passionate about the issue. Water, as we all know, is a vital resource, and as such, we must do our very, very best to protect it. I have a few minutes, so I'll try to be as clear and concise as possible. I wanted to touch in regards to the proposed water supply adjustment in the regulatory backstop approach. As you all know, this would change the requirement for 55 percent of unimpaired river flow to 55 percent in the wettest third, 45 percent in the middle third, and 35 percent in the driest third, when the species and water quality are at a higher risk. Although, in my opinion, I believe this is better than the VAs, I don't necessarily believe it's real protection. The Board is proposing to weaken the draft standards, and I believe that this approach would do more substantial harm and is ultimately looking in the wrong direction.	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project. The impacts of the VA and regulatory pathways are analyzed in Staff Report Section 13.7, Environmental Analysis.

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		Under both the VA approach as well as the regulatory backstop approach there will be significant effects to not only fish but rivers as well. The reduced flow will harm salmon, steelhead, and other native fish by; number one, raising temperatures; number two, limiting the habitat extent and quality for both spawning and rearing; as well as restricting fish passage and reducing food production. Another subset of impacts that I wanted to touch upon in my public comment today is -- and I hope it didn't go unmentioned, as I know other people also mentioned it -- so it warms my heart to make sure that both the tribal and cultural impacts aren't going overlooked. Flows affect cultural resources, the ability to do ceremonies, cultural traditions, access, and adequate tribal fishing. Although there are tribal beneficiary uses outlined in the report right now, which is a fantastic sign and good to see, I just want to reiterate that the protection of rivers also equals the protection of tribal heritage. That is axiomatic. Water quality is also a massive concern of mine. The reduced flows can increase algae blooms and toxins. Low freshwater flows as we all know cause toxic algae blooms in the Delta, kill pet life, wildlife, and make people really, really sick. Underserved Delta communities ultimately suffer the most when it comes to this. This is not just an issue of environmental justice. Surface water quality will degrade if we do not have additional freshwater flows in and through the Delta. In conclusion, though, I want to urge the Board to proceed expeditiously with the adoption and implementation of the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan, including strong new science-based protections that require increased flows of at least 55 percent in Central Valley rivers in most years. Decisions should be based on facts and science, not political pressure and wishful thinking. Thank you so much for the Board for the time.	
1590	1	SREDANOVIC: Hello, gentlemen. Thank you for your time and your patience. I'm Gail Sredanovic, a native San Franciscan who	Please see Common Response 1.1, General Comments, for responses to comments that make general comments, do not

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		loves California. I'm currently a resident of Menlo Park. You've heard me speak before. I'm co-Chair of the Social Justice Task Force of San Mateo County Democracy for America. This group has -- both groups have voted consistently to oppose the Delta conveyance and to support the demands of environmental groups such as Restore the Delta. I have been around for a while and I remember when there was an actual plan to fill in San Francisco Bay, which was stopped by Restore the Bay and their volunteers, and I remember when air pollution was so severe that at times you had trouble seeing down to the end of the street. I remember when Bayshore smelled so bad that it became a synonym for a stench. All those problems have been corrected by wiser heads and good decisions. Now you stand at a remarkably difficult and important crossroads. You are called to find a solution to the obvious decline of the Delta and estuary system. The Voluntary Agreements are clearly not working. The decline of fish stocks and the increase in toxic algae blooms constitute a great environmental injustice to the residents, to the tribes, and to our precious environment. Now if you have ever read Cadillac Desert, a book which is very well researched, you will know that our usage of water and our pricing of water favors wealthy developers and growers growing products for export to the detriment of everybody else. They cannot be allowed to dictate water policy in our dear state. Please choose to at least begin to correct past flawed decisions. Adopt the Bay-Delta Plan with the strongest possible scientific standards. Remember that what you decide here will set a standard for future generations and have widespread impacts. Please remember to do the right thing so that you can tell your children and your grandchildren what you did when you were on the commission. Thank you.	raise specific environmental impacts of the project, or do not raise specific economic effects of the project.