

FROM :

FAX NO. : 7074451976

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## **California Advisory Committee On Salmon and Steelhead Trout**

**By Email: [Director@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Director@wildlife.ca.gov)**

**By Facsimile: 916 319-2196**

**916 323-2232**

June 26, 2015

Charlton H. Bonham, Director  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
1416 Ninth St., 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Protection of Salmon in Sacramento River under Temporary Urgency Change Petitions by the Bureau of Reclamation and Department of Water Resources.**

Dear Director Bonham;

The California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead in our capacity to advise you, the director of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, recommends that you support the action by State Water Resources Control Board Executive Officer Tom Howard to limit Keswick Dam releases to the Sacramento River and require a new salmon temperature management plan by the Bureau of Reclamation. This action is warranted, given that 95% of winter run, and 98% of fall run salmon eggs and fry in the mainstem Sacramento River perished in 2014 due to inadequate water temperatures. Given the pre-existing diminishment of over 90% of all Sacramento River salmon and steelhead populations runs, a second year like 2014 could very well push the winter run to extinction and require listing of fall run salmon under the Endangered Species Act.

We encourage you to ensure that the priority use of Trinity River for Trinity River fish and wildlife protection is implemented to limit the amount of water exported from the Trinity River to the Sacramento River. That priority extends to maintenance of an adequate cold water pool in Trinity Reservoir. Trinity water exported to the Sacramento River contributes to maintenance of cold temperature requirements in Lewiston Reservoir, but Trinity River water is often warmed significantly as it moves through Whiskeytown Reservoir to Keswick Reservoir. Trinity water is often warmer than Shasta Dam releases and its use may be detrimental to maintaining adequate temperatures for Sacramento River salmon. The cold pool in Trinity Reservoir is necessary to prevent another massive salmon die off similar to 2002. If Trinity Reservoir cold water reserves are diminished by export operating practices, significant salmon losses could be experienced in the Trinity River and Lower Klamath River later this year.

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We also encourage you to take a more conservative, precautionary approach to making recommendations to the State Water Resources Control Board regarding the required finding in the Water Code that Temporary Urgency Change Petitions not harm fish and wildlife resources. We understand that CDFW supported the 2014 and 2015 Sacramento River temperature management plan on the grounds that it would not violate the California Endangered Species Act. Water Code Section § 1435, subd. (b)(3)\* requires a finding of no impacts to fish or wildlife and is not limited to listed species. We encourage you to broaden your focus in future recommendations to the SWRCB to include all runs of salmon and steelhead, not just listed species.

We thank you for your consideration of these points and look forward to hearing back from you on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Vivian Helliwell, Chairman  
P.O. Box 307  
Eureka, CA 95502  
[vhelliwell@mcn.org](mailto:vhelliwell@mcn.org)

cc: Senator Mike McGuire, Chair Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture  
Safford Lehr, CDFW Fisheries Branch Chief  
Kevin Shaffer, CDFW Program Manager, Anadromous Fisheries Branch  
Tom Howard SWRCB Executive Officer  
Felicia Marcus, SWRCB Chair

\*Wat. Code, § 1435, subd. (b)(1-4)

Before approving a temporary urgency change, the State Water Board must make the following findings:

1. the permittee or licensee has an urgent need to make the proposed change;
2. the proposed change may be made without injury to any other lawful user of water;
3. the proposed change may be made without unreasonable effect upon fish, wildlife, or other instream beneficial uses; and
4. the proposed change is in the public interest.