

Friday, March 29, 2013

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State Water Resources Control Board
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Thank you for taking the time to try and address some of the water issues we face in the valley. As residents and farmers we know first hand the importance of caring for our environment and water supply.

We strongly oppose the draft SED for the Bay-Delta Plan and request you to revise SED so that non-flow alternatives are prioritized. Alternatives like better predation programs, will provide greater benefits and protections for fish. These alternatives need to be implemented before demanding more flow from rural areas.

If the proposed Bay-Delta SED dedicating 35% of the Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus rivers is accepted the impacts to San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced Counties will be huge. The loss to farming this proposal would have in our fertile valley would be a significant environmental, economic, and habitat impact.

It would significantly impact our way of life. The Alvernaz family has been farming in Merced County for over 100 years. This one proposal is jeopardizing our ability to farm, our way of life, and our family business that has been based down through generations.

I am also concerned this proposal to increase the water flows of the rivers will have a negative effective on the habitat and wildlife along the river. My concern is that there are sewer (wastewater treatment) plants along the rivers. How and what will the significant increase river flow impacts on these wastewater treatment plants be?

In the City of Livingston the wastewater treatment plant is near the river. Before the new holding ponds were built the City of Livingston wastewater treatment facility was "accidentally" releasing sewage solids into the river. A building moratorium was placed on Livingston and the State of California helped the City expand and build new ponds. The old holding ponds close tot the Merced River were abandoned but not cleaned up. I wonder what kind of possible containments can be still lurking in the soil of those abandoned ponds? Will increasing the flow of the Merced River cause those old ponds to seep possible containments in the river?

Also the City of Livingston had a levee break on its new holding ponds and spilled over one million gallons of treated sewage into the Merced River. The City of Livingston officials have stated that when the Merced River is high there is flooding.

I wonder how many municipalities have wastewater treatment facilities along the rivers? What are the impacts to the rivers? I think the impacts of municipal wastewater on the rivers need to be looked at and considered.

May 2008 City of Livingston Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant had a break in the embankment of its holding ponds. Over a Million gallons of treated effluent flowed into the Merced River.



Caterpillar tractor in the broken Levee of wastewater holding basin.

May 2008 Wash out of the banks of Merced River when over one million gallons flowed from a break at the Domestic Wastewater Treatment

Plant



In addition to the above concerns is that the City of Livingston has serious water problems. The State of California has issued a couple of letters to the City about its concern of the City's water. The proposed requirement of 35 percent of unimpaired flow to fish and wildlife will have a significant negative impact on the existing water supply, resulting on a significant negative impact to the residents in Livingston.

This proposal will have a significant impact on the local communities. The impact will also be felt on a state and nation level. Since our valley ag products are a world commodity there will be an impact on the world level.

Please do not dry up our valley any more than it is. We need more water not less.
Please reconsider this proposal.

Thank you for your time.

Mr. and Mrs. James Alvernaz
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