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Public Hearing (3/20/13)
Bay-Delta Plan SED
Deadline: 3/29/13 by 12 noon

Good morning Mr Chairman and members of the board. My name is Michael Frantz. For nearly four years it has been an honor to serve the communities of Turlock, Denair, Hickman and Hughson as their representative on the Board of Directors of the Turlock Irrigation District. My constituents are both electrical ratepayers and small family farmers. Many have farmed on their land for multiple generations. The matter being discussed today has the potential to impact them severely, and as their elected representative, I have grave concerns. I would just like to speak briefly to four bullets points:

The first is we as an irrigation district, and as a community do not feel heard by your organization. TID as the operator of the New Don Pedro project has invested in the Tuolumne River, we have tremendous pride and love for the river. We have had a full time biologist studying the Tuolumne for over 40 years. We have conducted and published more studies about the health of the fish and wildlife in and along the Tuolumne than any other agency or NGO. Yet none the comments submitted on our behalf were incorporated into your document. None. How is it possible that the agency closest to the river, with more institutional knowledge about this precious resource could be possibly be completely disregarded?

My second concern is the overriding thesis in this SED is that increased instream flows will improve salmon smolt returns. Incredible amounts of peer reviewed science proves this incorrect (NMFS 2009, Daulbe 2010, Baker & Morhardt 2001 just to name a few). You seem willing to ignore our science and fallow vast swaths of productive farmland to increase fish flows. Before you ask some of the most disadvantaged communities in the state (unemployment at 15-17%) to give up a third of their economic engine, the Porter Cologne Water Quality Control Act, common sense, and even just basic human compassion would compel you to consider alternatives. Especially when your staff is disregarding sound science in making their conclusions. Partner with us; imagine if we combined our vast understanding of the river as the closest agency to the resource with your ability to affect statewide policy changes. If you truly want to improve the health of the San Joaquin river, consider coming along side us and working with us to better the environment.

Third, South Delta salinity is a stated reason for the increased flows. However, our existing flows are not allowed to help flush the salinity out of the South Delta. Studies (Susan Paulsen 2006) show that 98% of all San Joaquin river flows never make it past the South Delta. Virtually all flows are picked up by both state and federal export pumps. Why not wait until the BDCP has concluded its plan which would allow the State Board to look at the Delta in a comprehensive fashion? To rely on a plan that requires increased flows at the expense of senior water rights holders for the benefit of those with junior water rights puts the State Board in the awkward position of facilitating an illegal taking from one region to the benefit of some of the riches cities in the state.

Lastly, this document has so many areas of obvious capricious assumptions that it makes it difficult to assume that fish and wildlife and South Delta salinity are the true objectivities: How am I to explain to my constituents why the Hetch Hetchy water system is excluded from the 35% mandate? How do I explain that the SED excludes the entire upper San Joaquin River, the source of approximately 1/3 of the

San Joaquin's unimpaired flow? How do I explain that the plan proposed today is an adaptive one, yet it will decide the next years plan far before the snowfall for the season can be quantified?

In closing, the farms in my community only exist because of the sacrifices of prior generations. Our parents and grandparents mortgaged their farms to pay for the irrigation system that greened the San Joaquin Valley. Before you propose to turn it back to a brown fallowed barren land, the people deserve answers to the questions we have raised today. They deserve better.

Michael Frantz

Turlock Irrigation District, Board President