



To whom it may concern:

In 2010, the State Water Board issued a report stating that about 60% of unimpaired flow between the months of February and June is required in order to be fully protective of fish and wildlife in the lower San Joaquin River and its three major tributaries. With this in mind, the proposed 35% of unimpaired flows for the Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus Rivers from February to June is simply unacceptable. At least half of the San Joaquin River's natural flow should reach the Delta during the first six months of each year. Flows in the summer and fall should be sufficient to maintain fish and wildlife, water quality and recreational opportunities.

This decrease in unimpaired flows will be a significant detriment specifically to the salmon species that spawn in the San Joaquin River Basin. Historically, the Basin has known over 400,000 fish; more recently this number has dwindled to just a few thousand.

Though just one specie of fish, the salmon are actually highly significant, both economically and ecologically. Due to the dwindling number of salmon, the commercial salmon fishery in California is suffering major losses. In 2008 and 2009, the salmon population was so low that the commercial fishing season had to be cancelled.

Ecologically speaking, the salmon are crucial in maintaining the ecosystem of the Bay-Delta, which, as the west coast's largest estuary, provides a habitat for over 500 species of wildlife. The salmon are a keystone species in this habitat, providing food for other animals and transporting nutrients from the ocean to upland habitats. In fact, over 100 species depend on salmon.

There are solutions to this problem: through better management of snowmelt, water efficient irrigation practices, and replacing lower-value, water-intensive crops with higher-value, water-efficient crops, we could grow more food with less water.

I realize that there is pressure coming from all sides regarding this issue, but I think that there are ways to compromise without contributing to the steady elimination of salmon in the Bay-Delta rivers.

Thank you for your time.

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