



AINTSBURY

Ms. Karen Niiya

Division of Water Rights

State Water Resources Control Board

1001 I St., 2nd Floor

Sacramento, CA 95814

April 30, 2008

Dear Ms. Niiya:

We write to comment on the Proposed Instream Flow Policy for North Coast Streams. We are in strong support of measures to protect and enhance the salmonid habitat in North Coast streams and rivers. We farm wine grapes in Napa County, and are licensed to store and use water from several waterways. One of our vineyards was one of the first certified by the Napa Green program, a certification program for responsible fish-friendly farming practices.

The proposed policy is a blunt instrument and will have many unintended consequences. It will do little to actually enhance salmonid habitat, reproduction and survival. By focusing on higher Minimum Bypass Flows as sole means of improving habitat and rebuild populations, little will be accomplished. Pumping during peak flows will increase, as water rights holders scramble to obtain water to maintain their operations. This will eliminate the beneficial effects of high flows on maintaining appropriate stream morphology. In drier years, there will be a rush to secure water in many watersheds that will lead to unnecessary conflict among user and between the resources that the Water Code is intended to protect and promote. There are many other critical factors in sustaining a steelhead population that are completely ignored in the proposed policy.

We understand difficulty the Board faces in dealing with such a complex issue. By looking solely at peak flows, the Board has missed many opportunities to address the entire habitat and life cycle of the fish. We believe this Policy should be scrapped in favor of a more holistic one that has a much higher likelihood of achieving the goals of restoration.

Sincerely yours,

David Graves

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DIVISION OF WATER RIGHTS
SACRAMENTO
STATE WATER RESOURCES
CONTROL BOARD

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