



Monterey County Farm Bureau

Mailing address: P. O. Box 1449 Salinas, California 93902

Street address: 931 Blanco Circle Salinas, California 93901

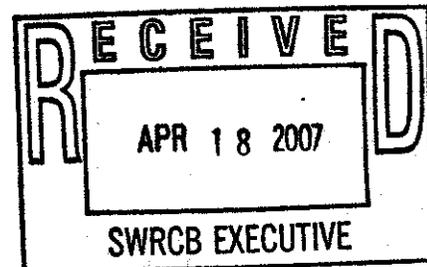
Telephone 831-751-3100 Fax 831-751-3167

E-Mail mocofb@redshift.com

Visit our website at www.MontereyCountyFarmBureau.org

April 18, 2007

Tam Doduc, Chair
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812



Comment Letter - Wetland and Riparian Area Protection Policy

Dear Chair Doduc,

We are writing to encourage you and your Board to take no action toward a "Wetland and Riparian Area Protection Policy" at this time. The State Wetlands Conservation Policy (Executive Order W-59-93) identifies "creativity, stewardship and respect for private property" as critical components of an effective policy. Alternatives to a one-size-fits all policy that imagines communities and riverine systems across the state are all the same do exist and should be reviewed by your Board.

The goals of the proposed policy are laudable. We support the protection of riparian and wetland areas and the safety of human life and property. These are not mutually exclusive goals and yet they are not likely to be achieved using a primarily restrictive approach. In fact, a restrictive, regulatory, approach is more likely to result in destruction of riparian and wetland areas.

Restricting the ability of water agencies and public works departments to conduct reasonable maintenance of stream channels ensures that destructive flooding will occur. Such floods remove large swaths of bank and vegetation burying or carrying away the existing habitat. What follows is a similarly destructive infestation of exotic plant species. Wetland systems meant to handle flood scenarios are overwhelmed when the upstream habitats unravel. Finally, protection of food safety must take a high priority and some ability to manage streams and wetland areas is needed. Placing further restrictions on the ability to manage the resource often has the opposite and un-intended affect.

We propose that you and your Board members take more time to consider how to protect wetland and riparian areas by supporting private landowner stewardship.

Please review the work of the Salinas River Channel Maintenance Program of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency. This Program has facilitated numerous small scale maintenance projects that protect both riparian habitat and human life and property. As always, please feel free to contact me for further information or insight regarding our specific situation here in the Salinas Valley.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Eli Perkins'.

Robert Eli Perkins, Executive Director