
From: Joel Masser [<mailto:joelmasser@hotmail.com>]

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To: commentletters

Subject: Delta water quality

Dear Chairwoman Marcus and Board Members,

When I travel around California, I always notice the flowing water. I like the waterfalls, rapids, and just watching the motion. It adds a certain liveliness and cheerfulness. From the High Sierra, Cascades, lower mountains and hills to the valleys and deserts, the rivers and streams are an important feature of the landscape. It is a thrill to see strong, healthy flows and is very sad to see dried out riverbeds, especially when the water has been appropriated for human use.

Damming the rivers and diverting too much water for farming and cities has damaged the river ecosystems, wildlife, commercial and sport fishing, recreation opportunities, and the tourism industry. Worst of all, water quality is degraded due to reduced flow, agricultural runoff, and impairment of natural life processes. Honestly accounting for environmental consequences shows that ever-increasing irrigation is a losing strategy which is damaging our economy and way of life and threatens much more dramatic damage in the near future. Cities are conserving more. Now we need to make a transition to a sustainable agricultural model, through more efficient irrigation and more water-efficient crops and livestock. Nutrition and water efficiency should count more than market value.

Salmon provide employment and food for many Californians but the fishery is in a state of collapse. Beyond these obvious direct benefits, many other species depend on a healthy salmon population and our water quality depends on biological activity in our rivers. It is a lot cheaper to let nature purify the water than to use energy-intensive and waste-producing synthetic methods.

We need to restore the flows in the San Joaquin-Sacramento river systems and through the delta to a minimum of 60% of unimpaired flows, as recommended in the 2010 report *Development of Flow Criteria for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Ecosystem*. More would be better. More water in the rivers is actually better for the California economy because it sustains the life and biological processes that in turn support our lives and livelihoods.

The Water Board has a golden opportunity to help California move toward an economy that will endure and ensure a good life for us, our children, and future generations. I urge you to mandate flows of at least 60% of unimpaired flows throughout the year.

Sincerely yours,

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