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May 10, 2016

Thomas Howard, Executive Director  
State Water Resources Control Board  
P.O. Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100

Dear Mr. Howard:

Dr. Steve Gomes, Merced County Superintendent of Schools, provided me with a copy of your recent letter addressing his concerns regarding the State Water Resources Control Board's pending update to the Bay-Delta Plan.

Dr. Gomes and other stakeholders from this area have been seeking active inclusion in your fact-finding and data gathering process. We find it difficult to understand how you can derive four alternatives and a preferred recommendation without an in depth discussion of any of the assumptions or information with the impacted drinking water jurisdictions.

To my knowledge, the only meeting the Water Board has held with the drinking water stakeholders in these groundwater basins occurred last October, and only happened at all because overwhelming community demand for information resulting from the "significant but unavoidable" conclusions drawn in your 2012 report.

At that meeting, stakeholders were told that the Board would address all questions in depth, in writing, and with further meetings. Much later, we were told those responses would be included in the updated report, which you now say will be issued in May or June.

Your letter claims you will have additions to the report that address our concerns.

This raises the same questions. Who updated the data? Local officials who are in charge of our schools and drinking water apparently were not involved. There is great concern locally over the impact of a permanent "regulatory drought" (which is how your staff described the proposal last October) upon our economy and quality of life. Many local stakeholders remain in the dark regarding what this means and what assumptions and data have been utilized in your findings.

Local stakeholders sought a process where they could be contributors to the analysis that results in your modeling and impacts analysis. Instead, it appears they will be put in a position of reacting to a set of alternatives that others have developed and analyzed, even though the greatest impact will be on this area.

In your letter, you mention that you disagree that the State Water Board has been indifferent to Merced County and its children, citing \$750,000 in drought emergency funds to repair or replace



some wells and deliver drinking water to stricken communities in Merced. Our challenge is much greater. In Merced County alone, we have over 70 wells on school sites. This does not reflect the dozens of schools within city limits served by city wells. Repair and or replacement of just these 70 wells could cost over \$5 million alone, and that assumes that the basin has available water of sufficient quality.

We face drought related issues, groundwater sustainability issues, and drinking water quality issues. Your Board's proposal will deprive our area of surface water, our single greatest source of groundwater recharge, which was financed by local ratepayers, and further exacerbate our problems. Your Board has also stated that there will be no mitigation of this enormous negative impact on the 800,000 people who live here.

I would urge you to spend the time necessary to fully explain your work to the people most impacted by it. Transparency is a full time process. It cannot be truly called transparent if information and assumptions are only released and discussed once conclusions and recommendations have been made.

I hope the State Water Board will address this matter fully and comprehensively.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Gray", written in a cursive style.

Adam C. Gray

Cc: Chair Felicia Marcus  
Superintendent Steve Gomes  
Superintendent Tom Changnon