

February 12, 2015

The Honorable Felicia Marcus, Chair  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairwoman Marcus:

The undersigned organizations write to express their strong opposition to Executive Director Tom Howard's February 3, 2015 order that denies project operators the flexibility to increase pumping during specific periods in February and March 2015 as requested in the Temporary Urgency Change Petition (TUCP) submitted by California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The State is entering its fourth consecutive year of drought and second year in a state of emergency. The U.S. Drought Monitor shows 78 percent of the state under "Extreme Drought" and 39 percent under "Exceptional Drought". The absence of precipitation in January, combined with a snow pack of only 25% of historical average, indicates there is no end in sight.

The statistics above only paint an aerial image of the drought's impact in California. The lack of water has a real-time devastating impact on real people. Just in 2014 the drought resulted in the following:

- 428,000 acres of irrigated cropland going out of production in the Central Valley, Central Coast and Southern California.
- A projected loss of \$800 million in crop revenue and \$447 million in well-pumping costs in the Central Valley.
- \$203 million in revenue loss due to statewide dairy and livestock losses from reduced pasture and higher hay and silage costs.
- The loss of 17,100 seasonal and part-time jobs related to agriculture.
- Unemployment rates in the Central Valley that are triple or quadruple that of the state average of 7 percent due to significant reduced employment in the agricultural sector.
- At least 1,760 wells have run dry, including wells to people's home. For the last seven months parts of the Central Valley have needed emergency drinking water and shower stations to provide for basic necessities.
- The Bureau of Reclamation was unable to meet its substitute water supply obligation to the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors, resulting in a zero percent allocation to the Friant Water Authority contractors for the first time in the 65 year history of the project.

Since the day the order went into effect until storm flows arrived in the Delta, as much as 10,000 acre feet of water has been lost. We do not have the time or resources to permit this sort of loss.

To reflect an appropriate balance between competing beneficial needs, the TUCP requested a crucial adjustment to water exports only when water is moving through the system. The TUCP had complete concurrence from State and Federal fish agencies directly responsible for ensuring the application of the Endangered Species Act for protected species in the Delta. Each agency concluded that the exports could be done without harm to fish. Furthermore, the TUCP proposed to continue to coordinate with the fish agencies to ensure decisions meet the requirements of the California Endangered Species Act, the Federal Endangered Species Act, and the governing biological opinions. Accordingly, we do not understand how the Executive Director determined the “elevated risk of entrainment impacts” to justify denying the proposed flexibility.

The State is in a crisis. The TUCP proposed an appropriate solution that was supported by all sectors. It is for these reasons we strongly urge you to reconsider the Executive Director’s February 3, 2015 order, and to immediately approve the TUCP in full granting the project operators the flexibility that California desperately needs.

Sincerely,



**Richard Matoian**  
American Pistachio Growers



**Chris Zanobini**  
California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers



**Joel Nelsen**  
California Citrus Mutual



**Roger Isom**  
California Cotton Growers  
California Cotton Ginners  
Western Agriculture Processors Association



**Barry Bedwell**  
California Fresh Fruit Association



**Manuel Cunha**  
Nisei Farmers League



**Renee Pinel**  
Western Plant Health Association

Cc: Fran Spivey-Weber, Vice Chair, State Water Resources Control Board  
Tam Doduc, Board Member, State Water Resources Control Board  
Steven Moore, Board Member, State Water Resources Control Board  
DeeDee D'Admo, Board Member, State Water Resources Control Board