



GLENN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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January 31, 2012

Mr. Phil Isenberg, Chairman
Delta Stewardship Council
980 Ninth Street, Suite 1500
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Draft Delta Plan EIR

Dear Chairman Isenberg and Council Members,

In September 2010, the Supervisors of the County of Glenn (County) provided comments to the Delta Stewardship Council (Council) on the Council's potential to adopt the flows recommended in the State Water Resource Control Board's ("SWRCB") draft report entitled "Development of Flow Criteria for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Ecosystem" ("Draft report"), dated July 20, 2010. Today the recommended flows are characterized as a "More Natural Flow Regime" and these recommended flows continue to be the primary focus of the County's comments to the Draft EIR. As a small, rural county, Glenn County relies on the assistance and input of other interests in the region to join together for the protection of water rights necessary to maintain our agriculturally based economy. Therefore, we would like to reiterate the sentiments of some of these organizations on the Draft EIR, in the following areas:

- The Draft EIR and the flow regimes required does not take into consideration the devastating effect these flow regimes would have on the overall economy of the Sacramento Valley region.
- The Draft EIR cannot adequately characterize or anticipate the effect of increased groundwater usage in the region the recommended flow regimes would initiate.
- The Draft EIR and the recommended flow regimes will have a severe impact on the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems that make the Sacramento Valley region a heaven for recreational activities.
- The Draft EIR states "*Flow objectives*" are limits or levels of flows for a specific period of time (such as during the "month of May in dry years") that would be established by the SWRCB in a quasi-legislative capacity under its regulatory function of establishing water quality objectives that can be achieved by specific flow limits or levels. **Flow objectives can be used by the SWRCB in subsequent efforts to establish or modify water rights.** Flow and water quality objectives are developed to protect all of the beneficial uses which have been designated for a water body, and generally protect the most sensitive of the beneficial uses.

*"Flow criteria" are recommended flows to protect a specific beneficial use. **Flow criteria are to be used to inform, but are not, by themselves, regulatory in nature.** For the Proposed Project, the flow criteria address flows to protect public trust resources in the Delta and Delta watershed in accordance with Water Code sections 85084.5 and 85056, but do not consider balancing of the flow criteria with other beneficial uses."*

In saying this, the Council does not take into account that the recommended flow criteria are inconsistent with the interests of the public or the policy of co-equal goals for the protection and restoration of the Delta and does not consider the effect to areas upstream of the Delta and the important role these upstream environments play for a healthy and economically viable California.

EIR environmental policy recommends that the SWRCB adopt and implement updated flow objectives for the Delta by June 20, 2014, and develop flow criteria for high-priority tributaries in the Delta watershed by June 2018. In our opinion, this aggressive timeline can only provide additional depletion of regional groundwater resources, cause economic and social impacts to the rural communities of the northern Sacramento Valley, and significantly reduce storage in Shasta and Oroville Reservoirs.

Sincerely,

GLENN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



STEVE SOETH, Chairman

cc: California State Association of Counties
Regional Council of Counties
Glenn County Water Advisory Committee

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