

State Water Resources Control Board

March 10, 2014

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jim Costa
1314 Longworth House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
112 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Garamendi
2438 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Feinstein, Senator Boxer, Congressman Costa and Congressman Garamendi:

Thank you for your letter of March 5, 2014 regarding water deliveries in California during this time of extraordinary drought. I want to address your concerns about both the timing and substance of future revisions to the current Order approving the Temporary Urgency Changes requested by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), the United States Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) for the operation of the State and Federal Water Projects (Projects). As your letter points out, critical spring planting decisions are now being made by agricultural operators and it is imperative that they make these decisions in full recognition of the water that will be available to them throughout the growing season.

I want to assure you that the State Water Board is working closely with DWR, Reclamation, the state and federal fisheries agencies, and stakeholders in its response to the drought. The leadership of the State and federal agencies and the Real Time Daily Operations Team has been meeting constantly to guarantee sufficient water supply to meet public health and safety needs through the remainder of this year and into a possible dry 2015. This same team is also looking for appropriate flexibility, as new storm systems approach, to boost storage in reservoirs both north and south of the Delta. For example, the Projects just increased pumping at their south Delta facilities to take advantage of recent precipitation and capture additional water for later use.

Recent collaboration among the agencies and Project water recipients is unprecedented and reflects the circumstances in which we find ourselves. The most recent precipitation events and their effect on reservoir storage and operations are now being

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analyzed and we expect to discuss proposals for next steps in the coming days. No action, other than actions to increase operational flexibility, will be taken to revise the Order until our collective analysis of current and projected conditions and proposals for operations to address these conditions is complete. We will be working with affected stakeholders to minimize the effects of future decisions on California agriculture and other uses of water. I anticipate that next steps will be announced on or about March 21st, as suggested in your letter.

I want to express my appreciation for your recognition of the complexities and challenges facing the State in managing our water resources during this extraordinary drought. Please let me know if I can provide further information or if it would be helpful to meet with members of your staff.

Thank you again for your interest and concern. I look forward to working with you and your staff to help address this crisis.

Sincerely,



Thomas Howard
Executive Director

cc: Mr. Gareth Elliott
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