



December 26, 2016

We appreciate that the State Water Resources Control Board recognizes that California's water is a shared resource, and that the board's challenge is to ensure that the resource is equitably shared among all members of the community. We know this is a hard decision for the board to make, but we agree with your plan to require 30-40% of unimpaired flow in the lower San Joaquin River and its tributaries—the Stanislaus, Tuolumne and Merced—between February and June. We recognize, however, that some compromises must be made to accommodate different sectors of the community.

May we suggest that you consider a flow increase of 5% more than the 20% that is the current rate? That isn't much, but it may satisfy all parties to some degree—not only farmers and municipal water consumers, but also environmentalists, conservationists, and recreational businesses. This benefit may also extend to the salmon, not to mention the rivers as healthy ecosystems that harbor so much wildlife, instead of little more than managed irrigation channels. Whatever decision you choose, we hope for some increase in water flow to these rivers, which flow through our service areas of Stanislaus and Merced Counties.

Sincerely,  
Salvatore Salerno, president  
Stanislaus Audubon Society