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Jeanine Townsend, Clerk of the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street, 24th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814-0100

Ms Townsend,

I'm a native Californian who has spent most of my vacations since the early 1970's hiking and fishing in the Sierra's, rafting or kayaking down our state's rivers or birding in the diminishing wetlands now disappearing throughout the delta.

I'm writing this letter to the board because I'm concerned with the environmental degradation that I have witnessed over these past decades. The depletion of salmon populations, being the most significant change I'm aware of. My god, The salmon population was so low in 2008 and 2009 that the commercial fishing season had to be cancelled, resulting in the loss of more than 2,200 jobs and \$255 million in annual revenue. When we understand that Salmon are a keystone species, providing food for other animals and transporting nutrients from the ocean to upland habitats; that more than 100 species depend on salmon, then we understand how important it is to restore our salmon-based ecosystem. It is critical that flows must be sufficient to inundate the floodplains, which serve as critical habitat for juvenile salmon and other fish. The low river flows impede fish passage, concentrate pollutants, raise water temperatures, decrease dissolved oxygen, and eliminate migratory cues for fish returning to spawn.

On average less than 50% of the freshwater flow from the Central Valley reaches the Bay, and in some years less than 35%. Reducing inflows shifts the size and location of the ecologically-important *salinity mixing zone*, affecting everything from plankton to marine mammals. Between 1975 and 2014, the **natural** unimpaired runoff in the watershed was only low enough to create a "supercritically dry" year once, but upstream diversions captured so much runoff during those four decades that the Bay experienced "supercritically dry" conditions in 19 years instead of just one. Reduced freshwater inflow has changed the chemistry of the Delta, enabling cyanobacteria to thrive. These

blue-green algae produce neurotoxins that can make people sick and kill plankton and wildlife.

I'm aware that there are many factors that contribute to the diminishing water flows that get from the mountains to the delta, but the largest diverter, by far, of the State's water resources are the agribusinesses whose access to cheap and plentiful state water supplies have encouraged wasteful water management and poor crop planting choices.

In California, water is a public trust resource, meaning it belongs to the people of California. Water agencies have water rights, but the State can determine which beneficial uses have priority. It could be argued that food grown for Californians is a beneficial use of our water, but it's harder to make that case for exports. Agricultural exports benefit a few farmers – often corporations – at the expense of other beneficial uses.

I urge the board to act wisely in allocating our precious water resources to the needs of ALL of the state's water users, and use your power to allocate improved instream flows from our rivers to adequately feed and protect the Bay – Delta.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Gaines". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "D" and "G".

David Gaines