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November 12, 2016

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

Subject: Comment Letter – 2016 Bay Delta Plan Amendment & SED

Dear Ms. Townsend,

I am writing to let you know of my support of the 2016 Bay Delta Plan Amendment. This is an essential opportunity to improve the health and wellbeing of Californians, as well as to sustain our natural resources and wildlands for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

As a physician practicing in California for greater than 15 years, I know our natural world can have tremendous health benefits. Preserving our rivers provides profound health benefits for Californians as they fish, hike, boat and enjoy the natural beauty of our state. Preserving such rivers as the Tuolumne is essential.

Needless to say, we as Californians are stewards of the land and can live and thrive here – while also preserving our natural resources. The Bay Delta Plan does just this.

As I am sure you are aware, historically, populations of spawning salmon may have exceeded 400,000 fish in the San Joaquin River Basin, but in many recent years that figure has plummeted to just a few thousand.

Low river flows impede fish passage, concentrate pollutants, raise water temperatures, decrease dissolved oxygen, and eliminate migratory cues for fish returning to spawn.

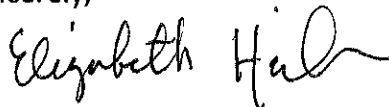
Flows should be sufficient to inundate floodplains, which serve as critical habitat for juvenile salmon and other fish.

Salmon are a keystone species, providing food for other animals and transporting nutrients from the ocean to upland habitats. More than 100 species depend on salmon.

The Bay-Delta forms the West Coast's largest estuary, providing habitat for more than 500 species of wildlife. It serves as a major stopover for the Pacific Flyway and as a migration pathway for salmon, steelhead and sturgeon traveling to and from their home streams to the Pacific Ocean.

As a lifelong California resident and as a practicing physician aware of the value of our natural waterways & ecosystems to Californians' physical and mental well-being, I feel it is essential that the Bay Delta Plan is enacted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Heilman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, flowing "H" and "M".

Elizabeth Heilman, MD