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March 5, 2017

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

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

Dear Members of the Board:

I have been involved in California watersheds, mostly in the South Bay area - specifically issues on San Francisquito Creek including those relating to Searsville Da - but I also spend summers in the watershed of the South Fork of the San Joaquin River in the Sierras. For the past thirty years I have been volunteering in restoration efforts in those watersheds, including designing and planning as well as participating and leading actual hands-on bank stabilization, non-native removal and native planting projects. Through these activities, I have gained considerable knowledge about watersheds, their systems and complexity, and what makes them healthy or not. It is this background and interest that has motivated me to write you with comments about the Bay Delta Plan.

My experiences have shown me the critical importance of adequate, reliable and consistent water flows to the health of aquatic ecosystems. Riparian species have co-evolved to take advantage of these flows and have integrated their life patterns with one another in such a way that they are all linked through the hydrology of the system. A significant and/or long-term reduction of presence of water can have a devastating ripple effect throughout the food web, one that, ultimately, can profoundly effect humans who are part of that chain. I only need to mention the recent closures of the commercial salmon fisheries to make that apparent.

These closures, due to the diminishing numbers of salmon in the system, should come as no surprise, as our human choices about how to use our precious water resources have brought that about. We have opted to create human systems that treat water as if we, alone, are dependent upon it and as if it were an unlimited resource. Recent climatic events and predictions for the future have shown the

latter to not be true, and, although we have made great strides in reduction of demand on our water, there is much more that should, and can, be done in this regard. Whether or not we like it, our water resources will become less available and reliable and we need to re-create our systems to accommodate that which we cannot change.

As part of this, we need to fully recognize, accept and plan for the need to maintain our riparian resources in good health. There is plenty of scientific evidence that supports the need for this protection, starting with fish, but echoing throughout the food web. This translates into more water being left in the system and to flow unimpaired to the ocean, thereby maintaining the delicate systemic balances that protect both the riparian as well as the delta areas that are the basis of the food web.

One of the amazing adaptation mechanisms they have allowed humans to evolve and dominate the earth's ecosystems is our ability to make rapid and effective changes to our life patterns in the face of changing conditions. We can migrate. We can change out shelters. We can access new food sources. We can build protections against inclement weather. We can cover ourselves if cold, and shed those covers as the weather changes. All this allows us to adapt readily and quickly in order to survive. Other plants and animals do not have this ready capacity. It is in our best interests to make use of these advantages to provide both for humans and the many other species upon which we depend for survival. This is what, at last, will see us through the impending future shifts in climate and its impacts.

In closing, I urge you to protect our aquatic resources by setting a standard of allowing 50%-60% of freshwater flows to move through the system to the bay, and work with other entities to reduce water demand to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,

Jerry Hearn

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