



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

To the State Water Resources Control Board:

I have lived in California for the past 18 years, residing in Palo Alto. From my first days here, I have enjoyed the incredible array of nature our state offers – the ocean, the mountains, the bay, and the beautiful rivers. It took me a bit longer to discover the wonderful treasure that is the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta.

A few years ago, a friend took my wife and I on an afternoon and evening ride on his pontoon boat and we enjoyed a remarkable vista, and saw countless varieties of birds. Birds are a passion of my wife's, and despite having travelled widely to view them, she is quite convinced that there's no better birding area in the world than our very own Delta.

Spending part of my childhood in central Florida, drinking water that smelled like sulfur, I am keenly aware that water can be potable without being especially tasty. I think the water we get from the Hetch Hetchy system is among the very best in the world. Keeping the Delta and the entire river system alive and vibrant as a living ecosystem strikes me as a very high priority indeed.

Keeping the ecosystem healthy depends on several factors, but certainly the most important of these is water itself. Unless we let the rivers flow more freely, the Delta that is such a crucial part of this ecosystem will die, and our water supply will be degraded as a result. Salinity will continue to increase and the creatures who live in and on the river will continue to suffer.

Beyond this critical resource, excellent drinking water, the rivers and Delta provide great recreational opportunities for many Californians. The deeply depleted salmon fishery is another part of our economy and our quality of life that simply needs more water flow.

Agriculture forms another important part of our economy and blesses us with the best produce obtainable in America. I was struck, however, as I listened to the people speaking at the Board's hearing in Sacramento on January 3, 2017, at how unevenly the financial rewards of the agriculture sector seem to be distributed. Speaker after speaker referred to the number of "disadvantaged" communities in the Central Valley, and the many citizens there were barely getting by. Surely this should bring into focus the degree to which farm workers are an artificially cheap input for the agriculture business.

Much of our 21st century farming is absentee-investor-owned, growing thirsty crops for the export market. Is this the best allocation of a public trust resource? Perhaps not.

The Board's own study in 2010 concluded that an unimpaired flow during the summer months would be required to preserve the Delta's health. Surely, we can manage 40%. We've been taking too much of the rivers' benison, and we all need to learn to get by on less.

I urge the board to adopt Revised 2016 Bay Delta Plan Amendment and SED.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barlow M. Westcott II". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barlow M. Westcott II  
722 Southampton Drive  
Palo Alto, CA 94303

cc. Assemblymember Marc Berman  
Senator Jerry Hill