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My name is Phil Osterli. I am a property owner and a retired County Director and Farm Advisor with the University of California Cooperative Extension for Stanislaus County. I am here today to comment on your river flow proposal, which I call TUNNEL VISION. My comments are mine alone and are based on a lifetime as a 2nd generation native Californian and a professional academic career developing and extending research based information to our citizens here in the Central Valley. I also owned and operated an irrigated apricot orchard in Patterson part time after hours, so I have some experience with reality.

I want to begin by commending you for getting up a little early, leaving the isolation of your cubicle in Sacramento and driving your state vehicle all the way down here so that we can comment on your proposed theft of our water. Your proposal is not only a bad idea, it borders on stupidity, is myopic and one-sided (TUNNEL VISION). We are under a state order to reduce our use of water while you propose to significantly increase the flow of our rivers out to sea. Our forefathers had the foresight to build, and pay for, dams to control the floods that today, if unchecked, would flood the lower elevations. Today these dams also generate power and provide water for agriculture and domestic use. That vision has resulted in the development of a multi-billion dollar economy and a very comfortable quality of life for our tax-paying citizens...the same people who pay for your office space, car and salary!

I spent a large part of my 35 year professional career assisting the agricultural community comply with bureaucratic regulations while maintaining economically viable production of many of the items you place on your table each day. I have attended hearings where elitist anonymous bureaucrats who don't live in our community spend a day hearing our concerns, then go back to their insulated cubicles, file away the comments and feel good about their effort. Unfortunately they are never really held accountable to those who have to live with these unrealistic proposals! I watched incredulously, while "feel good", unscientific testimony received equal weight to sound science based information and common sense in hearings like this one. I would like to think that today you are better than that and recognize that there are serious, negative, ramifications of this faulty proposal, and you go back to the drawing board and find alternatives!

We have carefully managed our water while other parts of the state make no effort to capture the rain that falls on their watershed, let alone conserve. Many years ago we were required to install flow restrictors on all faucets/shower heads in our homes and businesses. We complied, but I didn't see that same cooperation by our thirsty southern neighbors! When traveling, the showers in hotels I stayed in Southern California amazingly were unrestricted. It seems they still don't get it down there, so it might be more effective if you focused your efforts further south, where they don't seem to understand water conservation, rather they waste it by providing concrete lined rivers directly to the ocean! Or do they have TUNNEL VISION?

Biological systems are resilient and adaptive. I believe in evolution and survival of the fittest, and can't comprehend using the pretext of placing 1100 hatchery fish above people in your priority rankings. What foolishness! You should be ashamed! Or is this just a water grab with TUNNEL VISION?