

COUNTY OF SAN JOAQUIN

2006 Bay Delta Plan
Deadline: 11/13/06

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5 Attorneys for COUNTY OF SAN JOAQUIN

7 BEFORE THE STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

8 CONSIDERATION OF AMENDED WATER) COUNTY OF SAN JOAQUIN COMMENTS
9 QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE BAY-) TO DRAFT WATER QUALITY CONTROL
DELTA) PLAN SEPTEMBER 2006

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12)
13 The COUNTY OF SAN JOAQUIN ("County") submits its comments on the Draft Water
14 Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/ Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary ("Draft
15 Plan").

16 The comments of the County of San Joaquin relate to issues of concern to the County as a
17 whole in this proceeding, namely, the southern Delta salinity objectives and export limitations under
18 the water quality objectives for fish and wildlife beneficial uses set forth in the 1995 Bay-Delta Plan.

19 **SALINITY OBJECTIVES**

20 1) Salinity Objectives for the Southern Delta Should Not be Changed. The southern Delta
21 salinity objectives, originally set forth in the 1978 Delta Plan, were developed in order to protect
22 southern Delta agricultural uses from the effects of elevated salinity. The objectives set an electrical
23 conductivity value of 0.7 mmhos/cm electrical conductivity ("EC") for the three interior monitoring
24 sites specifically Brandt Bridge on the San Joaquin River, Old River near Middle River, and Old
25 River at Tracy Road Bridge, as well as Vernalis from April through August.

26 These objectives are the product of many years of extensive research, in which numerous
27 studies were performed and in which a majority of interested parties were involved. The studies and
28 research determined that a standard of 0.7 EC was needed because the wide variety of soil conditions

1 (more than 70 types) in the region have different permeability qualities and many require low
2 salinity irrigation water to prevent crop damage from salt. The County feels strongly that any
3 relaxation of the current standard of 0.7 EC would adversely affect agricultural practices and
4 production in the southern Delta. Therefore, it is the County's position that the current salinity
5 objectives remain unchanged.

6 2) Salinity Objectives Should be Met By Using Water From Multiple Sources, and Not
7 Overburden New Melones. The Draft Plan indicates that salinity objectives can be met by releasing
8 dilution water from New Melones Reservoir (Draft Plan at p. 27). Releases from New Melones are
9 currently used to meet salinity objectives at Vernalis. San Joaquin County fully supports meeting
10 the current salinity standards for the southern Delta but San Joaquin County strongly objects to the
11 current level, or any increased reliance on New Melones for dilution.

12 The reason for San Joaquin County's objection to the use of water at the present level or an
13 increased level for dilution is that the use of New Melones water for dilution results in a decrease in
14 the amount of water the Bureau of Reclamation ("Bureau") can furnish to the Central San Joaquin
15 Water Conservation District and the Stockton East Water District under the contracts of those
16 Districts with the Bureau. Much of Eastern San Joaquin County, including the City of Stockton, is
17 located over a severely overdrafted groundwater basin which presently cannot be replenished
18 because of a lack of water supply. The overdraft is critical and results in the movement of saline
19 water from under the Delta into the basin. The inability of the Bureau of Reclamation to deliver
20 water to its two customers Central San Joaquin Water Conservation District and Stockton East Water
21 District directly exacerbates the groundwater overdraft in the eastern San Joaquin County ground
22 water basin.

23 Therefore, it is the County's position that salinity objectives should be met by utilizing
24 numerous sources, and not relying on New Melones water to carry out this responsibility.

25 3) The Time Period Designated for Implementation of the Plan is Excessive.
26 According to the Draft Plan, full implementation of the Salinity Management Plan is expected to
27 take between 40 and 50 years (*Draft Plan* at p. 6). It is the County's position that the period for
28 implementation is excessive in light of the research already conducted and work already performed

1 in furtherance of this objective. An implementation schedule that meets a 10 to 20 year time period
2 is more appropriate.

3 4) There is No Need For Additional Research Regarding Salinity Needs in The Southern
4 Delta. The Draft Plan states “[T]here is a need for an updated independent scientific investigation of
5 irrigation salinity needs in the southern Delta. . .” (*Draft Plan* at p. 30). Extensive research
6 regarding water quality needs of significant crops grown in the south Delta has already been
7 performed, which supported the salinity objectives set forth in the 1978 Delta Plan (*Plan Amendment*
8 *Report, Appendix 1 to the 2006 Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-*
9 *San Joaquin Delta Estuary* at p. 63). It is the County’s position that any additional research
10 regarding water quality needs of crops in the southern Delta area would be redundant, and cause
11 unnecessary expense and delay in implementing the Salinity Management Plan.

12 EXPORT LIMITS

13 1) Current Export Limits Should Remain Intact or Decrease. The current regulations specify
14 the upper limits for flows and exports that are necessary to protect fisheries. Higher flows and lower
15 exports provide greater protection for fisheries. It is the County’s position that exports should not
16 exceed the existing limits and should decrease.

17 OTHER

18 1) 0.7 EC Salinity Objective Period Should Be Expanded. The County supports expanding
19 the months which the 0.7 EC standard should be imposed. The standard is currently in place April
20 through August. The County is in favor of expanding the period from March 1 through September
21 30.

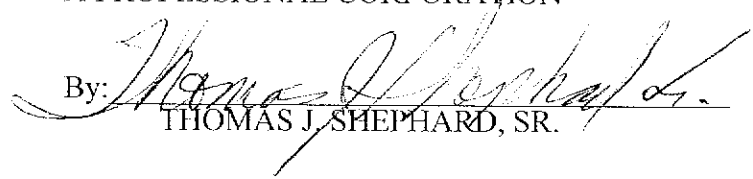
22 2) Minimum Flows Into the Delta and Minimum Water Levels Should Be Maintained To
23 Protect Agricultural Beneficial Uses. Minimum flows are necessary to maintain sufficient flow to
24 operate temporary and proposed permanent barriers, and to provide necessary water levels in areas
25 no longer subject to Delta tides.

26 Further, minimum water levels are necessary to protect agricultural diverters and fish and
27 wildlife in areas of the Delta, such as the Middle River. Portions of the Delta, including Middle
28 River, have extremely low flows or even go dry at certain times of the year. This precludes senior

1 water right holders and parties protected by the Delta Protection and Area of Origin Acts from
2 exercising their water rights. The County supports the establishment of minimum flows and
3 minimum water levels to protect these water rights, fish and wildlife and all other beneficial uses.

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5 Dated: November 7, 2006

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7 By:  THOMAS J. SHEPARD, SR.

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10 Attorneys for County of San Joaquin

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