



August 17, 2016

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Delta Smelt Resiliency Strategy

Dear Governor Brown:

We commend your Administration for taking a positive step forward with release of the Delta Smelt Resiliency Strategy last month. The water supply community has supported a more comprehensive approach to ecosystem management for more than two decades. Now there is a plan on the table that takes a life cycle approach and relies on a comprehensive set of tools to better manage aquatic resources as we implement powerful laws such as the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The signatories to this letter represent urban and agricultural water users in all parts of the state, ranging from north to south to coastal to inland. We have taken a strong policy position in support of comprehensive solutions such as those outlined in your California Water Action Plan.

The Delta Smelt Resiliency Strategy addresses multiple stressors and contemplates everything from creating better habitat, more food sources and higher turbidity to reducing levels of invasive weeds, predators and harmful algal blooms. It's a significant management shift away from the ineffective, single-stressor approach to a multi-pronged, systematic effort that will allow state and federal agencies to study the synergy of various actions undertaken as part of the strategy.

This is exactly the approach we need. As we have seen in recent decades and especially during the past four years of drought, focusing solely on pumping restrictions without addressing the myriad other factors affecting smelt populations and habitat has served to maximize conflict between species protection and water supply while failing to adequately serve either. The resulting situation has been completely at odds with California's commitment to the coequal goals of improved ecosystem health and water supply reliability.

While we applaud the Delta Smelt Resiliency Strategy's comprehensive approach, we must note that we have deep concerns about one element: further increasing summer outflows at a time when such flows would not naturally occur in the system. The science simply does not justify such an action, particularly

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given the impacts on California's water supply and economy. The summer outflow element represents a continuation of an ill-advised strategy that uses scarce water resources in a highly ineffective manner with little or no prospect of improving the environment. For this reason and in light of the coequal goals, we request that inclusion of the summer outflow element be reconsidered and eliminated from the strategy.

The water supply community strongly supports the California policy of coequal goals. However, actions by regulatory agencies continue to undermine that policy. Achieving the coequal goals in California requires a comprehensive strategy for water supply, as outlined in your California Water Action Plan, and for the ecosystem, as envisioned for the first time in the Delta Smelt Resiliency Strategy. The effectiveness of these initiatives can be further enhanced through improved transparency and stakeholder participation so we can begin to close the chasm.

We thank your Administration for your leadership on this issue and look forward to working with state and federal agencies as we move toward a fundamentally different approach to the ESA while remaining true to the coequal goals.

Sincerely,



Timothy H. Quinn
Executive Director
Association of California
Water Agencies



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Cucamonga Valley Water District



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cc: The Honorable John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources, California Natural Resources Agency
The Honorable Matt Rodriguez, Secretary for Environmental Protection, California Environmental Protection Agency
The Honorable Karen Ross, Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture
The Honorable Charlton Bonham, Director, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
The Honorable Mark Cowin, Director, California Department of Water Resources
The Honorable Felicia Marcus, Chair, State Water Resources Control Board
Ms. Kim Craig, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Brown
Ms. Karla Nemeth, Deputy Secretary for Water Policy, California Natural Resources Agency