
State Water Resources Control Board

JUN 26 2015

Mr. Ron Milligan
Bureau of Reclamation
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Mr. Milligan:

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND PLANNING ASSOCIATED WITH NEW
MELONES RESERVOIR OPERATIONS TO PROTECT FISH AND WILDLIFE

I have been notified that the reservoir storage projections and delivery projections identified in the May 15, 2015, New Melones Drought Operations Plan are substantially different from current conditions, which could limit the United States Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) ability to maintain suitable temperatures for steelhead and salmon in the Stanislaus River for the remainder of this year. Accordingly, the purpose of this letter is to request that Reclamation schedule to meet with key Stanislaus Operations Group (SOG) representatives within one week of receiving this letter for the purpose of evaluating New Melones and Stanislaus River management options for the remainder of the year. Additionally, I request that Reclamation perform additional modeling consistent with direction from the SOG that uses updated inflow, release, and storage projections, and that evaluates potentially viable management options identified during the requested meeting.

Furthermore, please provide information regarding the use of the low level outlet during 2001 and 2013 that was not provided in the May 15, 2015, New Melones Drought Operations Plan. Specifically, for both of these years in which the low level outlet was used, please provide:

1. a summary of the dates of operation and associated New Melones storage levels;
2. the degree to which the low level outlet was opened (e.g., half way, all the way) and its rate of release;
3. the degree to which the penstock was opened and its rate of release; and
4. Goodwin diversions and Stanislaus River temperatures and flows (at Knights Ferry and Orange Blossom) for the 14 days before, during, and 14 days after the time of low level outlet operation.

This information is needed to better understand how operation of the low level outlet affects Stanislaus River temperatures.

Finally, I request that additional management scenarios be considered for the remainder of this year, including use of the low level outlet under conditions when it is not ordinarily operated, delivery strategies that potentially help to protect fish and wildlife during these drought conditions, and alternative Tulloch Reservoir management strategies in coordination with Oakdale Irrigation District and South San Joaquin Irrigation District.

It is critical that management decisions for the remainder of this year be based on the most accurate and most up-to-date information available, and that these additional management scenarios be considered and evaluated for effectiveness during the remainder of this year. Please coordinate with my staff, the Districts, and SOG representatives to schedule the requested meeting and to provide the technical information necessary to plan operations for the remainder of the year.

Please coordinate with Diane Riddle of my staff at (916) 341-5297 or via email at diane.riddle@waterboards.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas Howard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Thomas Howard
Executive Director