

**Petition to the California State Water Board**

STATE WATER RESOURCES  
CONTROL BOARD

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March 14, 2013

State Water Resources Control Board Members c/o Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street, 24th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

**RE: BUSINESS OWNERS SUPPORT RESTORING HEALTHY FLOWS TO THE LOWER SAN JOAQUIN RIVER**

Dear State Water Board members:

We, the undersigned business owners and operators, urge the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to use its authority to set strong flow standards on the Lower San Joaquin River and its tributaries, in order to restore fisheries and recreational uses. Our businesses, while different, all rely on the health of Central Valley Rivers and the San Francisco Bay-Delta. We have endured the ongoing degradation of our waterways for years and as a result our businesses have been impacted and many of our friends have lost their livelihoods.

Healthy rivers and abundant salmon and steelhead mean business: from the docks to the upper watershed, healthy salmon and steelhead runs and wild rivers support thriving businesses. We are fishermen who catch salmon; we are processors who bring it to market; we are marinas and supporting businesses that sustain fishing jobs; we are fishing guides and charter boat operators who take more than 300,000 Californians fishing each year for salmon, sturgeon, and steelhead; we are rafting outfitters that take people on trips in the San Joaquin Valley; we are local bait and tackle shops that supply rods, reels, lures and tackle to fishermen; and we are businesses that depend on a vibrant tourism industry. By improving flows on the Lower San Joaquin River, the SWRCB can help protect and restore our jobs and livelihoods, which depend on healthy rivers and a healthy Bay-Delta.

State Water Resources Control Board, *Cont'd.*

The SWRCB has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reverse decades of declining fisheries, water quality conditions, and fresh water flow rates. Unfortunately, the

SWRCB's recent draft standards for freshwater flows will do little to change the unacceptable status quo. The 25% - 45% unimpaired flow range neither adequately supports the much-needed restoration of the San Joaquin River, its tributaries, and the Bay-Delta, nor fairly weighs the needs of fisheries and recreational beneficial uses. The draft standards do not adequately consider the benefits our businesses (and others like us) receive from a functioning river ecosystem or the significant economic benefits we provide to California's economy when our businesses are healthy.

We urge the SWRCB to require that:

- At least half (and as close to 60% as possible) of the San Joaquin River's natural flow reach the Delta during the first six months of each year.
- To the maximum extent possible, winter-spring flows track natural patterns (magnitude, duration, timing, and frequency) of freshwater flow.
- Adaptive management of flows and other non-flow restoration measures focus on attainment of specific and measureable biological and physical outcomes (such as the CVPIA/AFRP anadromous fish doubling targets).
- Flows in summer and fall be sufficient to maintain fish/wildlife, water quality, and recreational benefits in the Bay-Delta, lower San Joaquin, and San Joaquin tributaries. We are deeply concerned that the current draft flow standards will basically enshrine the status quo of disappearing fisheries, deteriorating water quality, and declining opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of the Delta, the San Joaquin River, and the San Joaquin's tributaries. The status quo threatens the survival of our businesses and all those that depend on healthy rivers. Requiring adequate flows in the lower San Joaquin River will support conditions that our businesses will benefit from, including:
  - Restoration of up to 100,000 Chinook salmon every year.
  - Restoration of steelhead and sturgeon, sought-after sport fish that are now listed as endangered species throughout the Central Valley.
  - Improved water quality in the lower San Joaquin River and southern Delta for agricultural, municipal, and recreational use.
  - Improved river conditions in the San Joaquin and its tributaries that encourage and support fishing, boating, and other non-consumptive uses of the river.

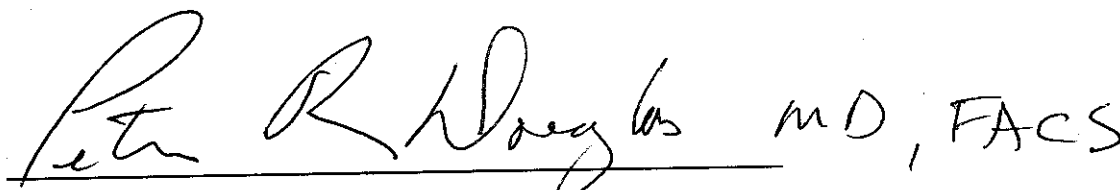
State Water Resources Control Board, *Cont'd.*

Our businesses have continually suffered from poor water quality and flow conditions, while other businesses have benefitted from the diversion of too much water from the Central Valley Rivers. From 2008-2009, California's salmon fishery was completely

closed for the first time in our great state's history, with devastating impacts to thousands of men and women whose livelihood depends on the salmon fishery. Similarly, tourism is California's biggest industry and it is hampered when rivers have too little water and too few fish. We hope the SWRCB will restore a long-lost balance between those who extract water from the River and Delta, and those, like us, whose businesses and livelihoods depend on leaving more water flowing from the southern Sierra Nevada to the Sea.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

  
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(signature)

PETER R DOUGLAS  
(print name)