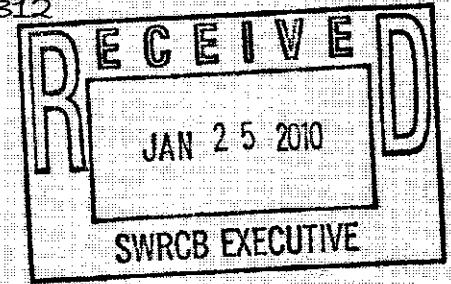


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January 22, 2010

Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
PO Box 100  
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**MEETING ITEM: COMMENT LETTER – 2/16/10 BOARD MEETING ITEM: ORDER – KERN RIVER**

In 2001, the Greater Bakersfield Vision 2020 organization led over 13,000 of our local citizens through a visioning process for the continuous improvement of our community. We continue to monitor and champion implementation of this community-wide vision.

Strategies and tactics were evolved through this bottom-up process within the following segments:

- Economic Development
- Education / Life-Long Learning
- Quality of Life
- Youth and Families
- Our Downtown
- Community Planning
- Transportation
- Image

Within each strategy were developed specific, measurable, and time-bound objectives or tactics to accomplish the strategy to which each tactic referred. The Quality of Life strategies – the segment of the visioning process I chaired – included 24 strategic goals. One of the 24 was:

- **Strategy #9: Keep water in the Kern River year-round through Beach Park from 2001 forward.**

Two tactics (or objectives) were added in support of this strategy:

1. **Support Governor's \$23 million Kern River Restoration Project to keep water in the Kern River through Beach Park. (We did!)**
2. **Center high-density and retail/restaurant development along the river and downtown canals/riverwalks.**

With 13,000 residents participating in this visioning process, truly amazing outcomes resulted:

- A major shopping center has been constructed by Castle & Cooke alongside the Kern River – including restaurants such as P. F. Chang's, California Pizza Kitchen, Elephant Bar, and others. *This major private investment has transformed this part of the Kern River.*

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- Adjacent to the commercial development is a major public park (The Park at RiverWalk) constructed by the City of Bakersfield. Adjacent to the park is a youth baseball complex funded by a combination of public and private funds. It has a double purpose. The baseball fields are recessed below grade to provide for water overflow capture, if needed. *All infrastructure for this purpose is installed.*
- Vision 2020's Quality of Life Strategy #7 states, "... to create a greenbelt corridor along the Kern River with a bike path from Lake Ming to Buena Vista Lake." The bike path has been constructed all along the Kern River at significant public cost (\$200,000 per mile).
- A major downtown development alongside a canal – called the Mill Creek Project – converted an under-utilized and deteriorating downtown park into a magnificent facility adjacent to our Bakersfield Museum of Art and a senior center. *This project has transformed Bakersfield's downtown art district.*

All of these public and private investments now have been made – yet . . .

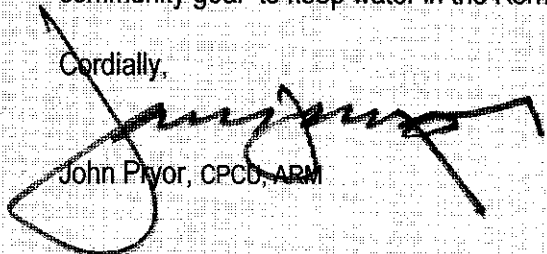
**... THERE'S STILL NO WATER IN THE KERN RIVER WHERE  
THESE SAME INVESTMENTS ARE NOW LOCATED!!!**

As a community, our public and private entities have "held up our end of the bargain", i.e., we've invested heavily in our community's portion of this Vision 2020 Quality of Life strategies. Now it's time for your board's authority to be granted for ultimate implementation of the balance of Strategy #9 by making water available in the Kern River year-round through the Park at RiverWalk – and beyond.

Incidentally, our vision was initially drafted in 2001 when development extended only through Beach Park. With the advent of the Park at RiverWalk and the extensive commercial development, it's now clear that water in the Kern River should extend at least through that park – and beyond, if feasible.

**I totally support the staff recommendation that the Kern River be declared "not fully appropriated" which I hope will ultimately result in full implementation of our long-overdue community goal "to keep water in the Kern River year-round."**

Cordially,

  
John Pryor, CPCO, ARM