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STATE WATER RESOURCES
CONTROL BOARD

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DN OF WATER RIGHTS
SACRAMENTO

September 15, 2006

Ms. Karen Niiya
Mr. Eric Oppenheimer
State Water Resources Control Board
PO Box 2000
1001 I Street, 14th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

Re: Scoping Comments on Instream Flows Policy

Dear Ms. Niiya and Mr. Oppenheimer:

The purpose of this letter is to provide our comments on the proposed North Coast Instream Flows Policy. We concur with the set of comments submitted to you by Wagner & Bonsignore Consulting Civil Engineers, James C. Hanson Consulting Civil Engineer, and Ellison, Schneider & Harris L.L.P.

We support the Board in its efforts to make improvements to the water rights process. Our primary concern regards the proposed use of water quality authorities to set instream flows. Such a major change to water rights and the water rights system can only be done following proper notice to the public and water rights holders.

The goal should be to accomplish actual improvements for instream flows. A Draft Guidelines-type approach may function as a screening tool to decide whether to reject water rights applications or for potential protestants to decide whether or not to protest an application. It should not be used as a mechanism to set flow standards.

Our members would be willing to cooperate with others in the same watershed in a process that could result in flow standards tailored to meet local conditions. Better that all parties work together to achieve on-the-ground changes than spend time and money on multiple steps in the standard water rights process.

We believe that modest changes to the water rights permitting system may produce substantial improvements for new water rights applications and the administration of existing permits and licenses. We find the concepts being put forward for process changes, a North Coast Permit and a Watershed Management Approach can deliver improvements that will benefit the Board, applicants and fish.

Sincerely

Nick Frey

Nick Frey
President