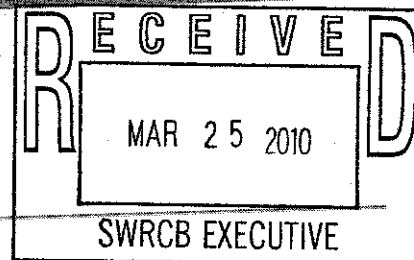


commentletters - Comment Letter AB 2121 Policy February 2010 Draft

From: <DFBowman@aol.com>
To: <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: 3/25/2010 3:33 PM
Subject: Comment Letter AB 2121 Policy February 2010 Draft



State Water Resources Control Board, Jeanine Townsend, Clerk

The Homeowners Association of The Sea Ranch has made the homeowners and residents aware of the Proposed Policy AB 2121 which is open for comment only through March 26. Apparently from the limited information available under this short notice, The Sea Ranch community, which has been in existence since the 1960s and has grown to be a vital component of the northwest Sonoma County coast, could face crippling restrictions on water usage from the Gualala River under the proposed policy. As a homeowner since 1982 in the Association, I am seriously concerned about the continued existence of the Sea Ranch and indeed of many other California communities that depend upon riparian water flows, if the proposed restrictions are adopted.

I know that you will be receiving many other letters from the Association and members which will detail our concerns with the draft policy, so rather than repeat their arguments I would just like to add some personal observations of the manner in which these types of proposals appear to be drafted, the data that are incorporated in consideration, and the manner in which public input or comment is solicited or even made available.

A vital natural resource like water has been essential to community establishment and development. When these developments were planned over fifty years ago, steps were taken as necessary to obtain water rights appropriate to the needs of the community and the capacity of the sources. While it is probably appropriate to note that consideration for the propagation of wildlife, and particularly of fish, was of relatively low priority in the past, these factors have been considered at increasing weights recently and policies and practices adopted to attempt to strike a reasonable balance between these competing needs.

It would appear, however, that the proposed policy would upset this balanced approach, give little or no weight to past legal and responsible practices, and require costly and often unnecessary justification from existing users. The users, moreover, are being given little chance to comment on the issues. At the very least the policy should be changed to recognize the rights of current users to continue under current permits with changes to be made only upon consideration of the rights and needs of all users, not just wildlife. Permits should be allowed to address the requirements of specific sites, not a "one size fits all" standard, priority should be given to long time responsible users over new applicants, and current users as well as the public at large should be given adequate opportunity to comment on proposals.

At the very least please extend the comment period for at least 90 days and offer sufficient hearings at various locations to assure that the affected public can be adequately heard.

Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely, DeWitt F. Bowman