



Statement from Nicole Sandkulla, Chief Executive Officer, Challenging the Accuracy of Comments by the Policy Director of the Tuolumne River Trust about the State Water Resources Control Board's Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan (Plan)

August 12, 2018

In an email on August 6, 2018, to a public official in Santa Clara, and on several other occasions, about the State Water Resources Control Board's Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan (Plan), Peter Drekmeier, Policy Director for the Tuolumne River Trust, stated that BAWSCA "continues to distribute misleading and erroneous information" about the Plan. Mr. Drekmeier's statement is incorrect. The Tuolumne River Trust is a special interest group, which represents environmental interests for the Tuolumne River.

BAWSCA supports the goal of the Plan but strongly opposes the State Board's current proposed details of implementing it. BAWSCA supports the science-based alternative developed and proposed by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), which has been developed by experts on the Tuolumne River and which, when implemented, will provide greater fishery benefits with reduced water supply impacts. To date, the State Board and Tuolumne River Trust have essentially disregarded this proposed alternative and the science that supports it.

BAWSCA is a state-authorized agency representing the water-supply interests of more than 1.8 million residents, 40,000 businesses, and thousands of community agencies in Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties that rely on water from the Tuolumne River and the San Francisco Regional (Hetch Hetchy) Water System which sells and distributes it.

Mr. Drekmeier also charges that the SFPUC's analysis of the Plan falsely characterizes the damage it will do to water users BAWSCA represents. He is wrong. The SFPUC's analysis is founded on facts and is performed by experts in the fields of water resources and resource economics.

The SFPUC relied on its water-system models and experience to analyze the water supply impacts of the proposed Plan. This analysis includes the SFPUC's anticipation of a future drought that is slightly greater than the six-year drought of record from 1987-1992. Forecasting a future drought that is more severe than a past one is an approach consistent with water-supply planning by responsible agencies throughout California.

Mr. Drekmeier also claims that most agencies plan for a 3-year drought. While that might be what agencies have assumed in the past, Governor Brown's Executive Order B-37-16, issued following the most recent drought, requires water suppliers to plan for more frequent droughts lasting at least five years.

In addition, Mr. Drekmeier claims that the economic study prepared by Dr. David Sunding, one of the SFPUC's economic consultants, is "extremely flawed" and has been "debunked." This is incorrect. Dr. Sunding is the Thomas J. Graff Chair in the College of Natural Resources at UC Berkeley, and he has served on panels at the National Academy of Sciences and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Science Advisory Board. Also, he has testified before Congress, state legislatures and regulatory bodies. He also was a senior economist on President Bill Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers. Recently, Dr. Sunding met with representatives from several environmental organizations to explain his analysis and answer their questions about the Plan. So far, there have been no alternative analyses that disagree with his analysis.

Finally, Mr. Drekmeier claims that in a future drought, replacement water could be purchased from one of the agricultural water districts. That is not true. BAWSCA and the SFPUC have asked several irrigation districts for a water transfer since 2001. Even during the most recent drought, BAWSCA was unable to complete a small, planned pilot water transfer due to permitting restrictions and capacity limitations.

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