



BAWSCA Continues to Support Evaluation of a Voluntary Agreement to Ensure a Reliable Water Supply for Residents, Businesses, and Communities in Alameda, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties that BAWSCA Represents under State Law and Urges the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) to Move Forward Now to Protect Fish and Water Users.

July 27, 2021

Good afternoon President Maxwell and Members of the Commission. I want to talk about the Bay Delta Plan, its impacts on the water customers BAWSCA represents, and urge you to act now to protect the fish in the Tuolumne River with early implementation of non-flow habitat and other measures proposed in your Tuolumne River Voluntary Agreement (TRVA).

You know that BAWSCA represents the 26 water agencies that purchase two-thirds of the water delivered by the San Francisco (Hetch Hetchy) Regional Water System (System). These agencies, in turn, provide water to 1.8 million residents, 40,000 businesses, and hundreds of communities. BAWSCA has been engaged in the process to update the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan (Plan) and continues to support its objective. However, BAWSCA cannot support the Plan adopted by the State Board in December 2018 due to the resulting significant impacts to the water customers it represents.

Recently, our member agencies have adopted state-required urban water management plans that show they would suffer up to a 50-percent loss of water supply from the System during a drought like the one we are currently experiencing if the adopted Bay-Delta Plan was in force. They have also had to adopt drought-contingency plans that identify how they would allocate that limited water supply during a drought, which would result in an unacceptable economic slowdown; health and safety risks, and economic damage to our residents, businesses, and communities; and limit the abilities for cities to approve construction of new affordable-housing for residents and employees of vital businesses.

These are the same unacceptable impacts that BAWSCA described for the State Board as it adopted its Plan. They were why BAWSCA, in February 2019, intervened in litigation to protect the water interests of its 26 water agencies against the State Board's 2018 Plan. BAWSCA joined San Francisco and other water suppliers with objections related to the Plan, and the impacts to BAWSCA's agencies.

The challenge of how to protect the fish and the environment must be addressed, but the Plan also seriously threatens the water supply from the Tuolumne River for people, businesses, and communities in the three counties, which must be protected as well. These impacts are unacceptable and require a realistic alternative to the Plan.

Fortunately, there is one, the thoughtful, scientific based TRVA, developed by the Modesto and Turlock Irrigation Districts and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. The TRVA will provide critically needed benefits for the Tuolumne River fish and environment and reasonable protection for an essential water supply for BAWSCA's constituents.

The State Board made a strong appeal for water leaders to provide a viable, voluntary alternative to its Plan. Governor Newsom has strongly endorsed voluntary agreements like the TRVA. BAWSCA supports the evaluation of the TRVA by the State Board as an alternative to the adopted Plan.

So now is the time for action that will show your commitment to a solution for the Tuolumne River, the fish, and the water customers. As such, BAWSCA supports you and the Districts moving forward now with investments in early implementation of the non-flow measures in the TRVA that are designed to provide critically needed benefits for the fish.

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