



Statement from Tom Smegal, Chief Executive Officer for the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA), Supporting the Timely and Continued Evaluation of the Tuolumne Healthy Rivers and Landscapes (HRL) Proposal by the State Water Board

April 10, 2025

Last month, the Tuolumne River Partners (TRP) comprising the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) and Modesto and Turlock Irrigation Districts sent a letter to Governor Newsom reiterating that the Tuolumne HRL proposal is integral to the State Water Board's overall evaluation of a Bay Delta Plan. BAWSCA supports that position.

BAWSCA appreciates the administration's commitment to getting a comprehensive HRL agreement ready for the State Water Board's consideration this summer. However, BAWSCA shares the TRPs' concern that action on the Tuolumne HRL Proposal is delayed and might not be included in this summer's action.

In 2018, the State Water Board adopted Phase 1 of the Bay-Delta Plan, which if implemented severely restricts flows that can be used for water supply purposes during droughts from the Tuolumne River, which is the source of 85% of the water for the San Francisco Regional (Hetch Hetchy) Water System (System), which in turn provides two-thirds of the water used by BAWSCA's agencies.

Soon thereafter, as encouraged by the State Board in its adoption of Phase 1, the SFPUC and its Tuolumne River partners came forward with the Tuolumne River Voluntary Agreement (TRVA) which proposed that a combination of river flows, river operations, and habitat enhancements could provide equal or better results for species protection with less impact to water supplies.

In January 2021, then BAWSCA Chair Barbara Pierce stated BAWSCA's clear and sensible request: that the TRVA be evaluated by the State Water Board to determine whether it was indeed equal to or better than the adopted Bay-Delta Plan in terms of the State's environmental objectives while maintaining a reliable supply of water at a fair price for the water customers that BAWSCA represents. That evaluation of the TRVA, now called the Tuolumne HRL Proposal, has been taking place since 2023.

BAWSCA's support for the State Board's evaluation of the Tuolumne HRL Proposal is consistent with BAWSCA's mandate from the California Legislature to protect the water-supply needs of BAWSCA's 26 members and the 1.8 million people, and over 40,000 businesses and community organizations in Alameda, Santa Clara, and San Mateo Counties that they serve. A reliable supply of high-quality water at a fair price is BAWSCA's goal, as it has been for more than 20 years.

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