



BAWSCA Urges the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) to Follow State Law and Report Progress Annually to Find and Develop New Sources of Water for Future Drought Years Without Delay

June 25, 2019

President Caen, Vice President Vietor, and Commissioners Maxwell, Moran, and Paulson:

I am here today to speak briefly about the future dry-year water supply for customers of the San Francisco Regional (Hetchy Hetchy) Water System (System) in Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties, whose interests BAWSCA represents under California law (AB 2058).

In 2002, the California legislature enacted AB 1823, mandating that the System be rebuilt to withstand a future large earthquake that could threaten the health, safety, and economic well-being of those people, businesses, and communities. Section 73504(a) of that Act also required the SFPUC to report to the State annually about “the progress made during the previous calendar year on securing supplemental sources of water to augment existing supplies during dry years”. That means not just looking for supplemental supplies. It means making tangible progress finding and developing them.

The SFPUC focused first on rebuilding the System to ensure the safety of the water customers that rely on it. The SFPUC organized a large, skilled organization to complete what became known as the Water System Improvement Program, or WSIP, a massive \$4.8 billion capital improvement program. It is reviewed annually by the State of California and monitored closely by BAWSCA.

Today, the System faces increased risk of significant drought shortages. As part of the WSIP, the SFPUC’s efforts have focused on developing a new groundwater supply and restoring existing drought water supplies. These efforts are insufficient to address the magnitude of the current projected supply shortfall. If the current adopted Bay Delta Plan to provide more water for fish in the Tuolumne River is mandated and a Voluntary Agreement is rejected, the loss of water for BAWSCA’s member agencies and their customers will be very serious.

The SFPUC has estimated that the adopted Bay Delta Plan could result in a loss of 90 million gallons per day. It could require a 50% reduction of water for residents in BAWSCA’s service area and corresponding reductions for businesses and community agencies that support them. Losing that much supply would severely impact people, businesses, and communities that rely on the System. Jobs will be lost, much needed housing will be delayed, and our communities will suffer. Furthermore, the SFPUC must make a decision by 2028 about permanent customer status for San Jose and Santa Clara.

We believe the Governor, his strong water team, and the State legislators representing these counties will continue to support a Voluntary Agreement, which they have done aggressively so far. The current negotiations can be concluded with benefits for the fish, our residents, and the businesses and communities which depend on a reliable supply of high-quality water. At the same time, the SFPUC must build on the lessons learned in meeting the challenge of the WSIP and develop critically needed new supplies to ensure drought year reliability in the region.

The SFPUC should now focus on developing new sources of supply in the same manner that the WSIP has been successfully implemented – as a water supply program, with clear objectives, persistent focus, a dedicated team, and a plan for successful execution. BAWSCA will support the SFPUC efforts to develop new supplies as it did in the implementation of the WSIP.

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