



A Response from Chief Executive Officer Nicole Sandkulla at a Meeting of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) to a Message from Governor Newsom's Secretaries of the Environmental Protection Agency and Natural Resources Agency about a Voluntary Agreement to Improve Fish and Wildlife Conditions in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta

October 26, 2021

Last week, the California Secretaries of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources told the SFPUC, BAWSCA, and others that they will advance a voluntary water agreement with the Sacramento River basin water users and State and Federal water contractors, but that agreement will not include the San Joaquin and its tributaries including the Tuolumne River. We appreciated this heads up. They also will ask the State Water Board to implement the adopted Phase 1 Bay Delta Plan (Plan).

Unfortunately, this agreement does not include the Tuolumne River, which provides 85 percent of the supply delivered by your Regional (Hetch Hetchy) Water System and is relied upon by BAWSCA's 1.8 million residents, 40,000 businesses, and hundreds of vibrant communities in Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties.

Consequently, that decision puts these water users at risk of a severe, water-supply shortage from the Plan, which could reduce that supply by 90 million gallons per day during drought years, requiring rationing by up to 50 percent. That is completely unacceptable. And, Commissioners, your water users in the City of San Francisco now face the same water-supply reduction.

Obviously, a way must be found to protect the water users from this enormous water reduction. Since you supply almost all the water for these customers, BAWSCA urges your Commission to address this very serious matter aggressively now. You and your staff have the technical credentials and responsibility to do so.

Fortunately, the SFPUC and the Modesto and Turlock Irrigation Districts several years ago, responsibly, developed the Tuolumne River Voluntary Agreement (TRVA) that will increase in-river salmon production while providing reasonable protection for the water supply that is critically important for BAWSCA's member agencies. The TRVA will be paid for by the water users, not the taxpayers, and it needs to be analyzed by the State Board now. San Francisco can help make it happen.

Assembly Speaker Pro Tem Kevin Mullin, who represents 500,000 water customers in San Mateo County, asked BAWSCA to organize a strong, public support group for this effort. It includes the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, whose 350 members drive the local high-technology economy; the Bay Area Council which is focused in part on building and maintaining our strong economy; the Mayors of Hayward, Redwood City, and San Jose, the three largest cities in the service area, which depend on this water supply; and very importantly, California state Senators and Assembly members, who represent these water users.

BAWSCA looks forward to working with this team of allies and with your Commission to get the TRVA analyzed promptly by the State Water Board, which invited voluntary agreements as alternatives to its Bay Delta Plan.

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