



Statement Delivered by Nicole Sandkulla, Chief Executive Officer, to the State Water Resources Control Board in Support of its Evaluation of the Proposed Tuolumne River Voluntary Agreement as a Possible Amendment to the Bay-Delta Plan to Provide Greater Water Flows and Increased Habitat to Protect Fish and a Reliable Water Supply for BAWSCA's 1.8 Million Residents, 40,000 Businesses, and Hundreds of Communities in Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties.

May 18, 2023

Hello. My name is Nicole Sandkulla and I am the Chief Executive Officer for the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency, also known as BAWSCA. I appreciate the opportunity to provide these oral comments today.

BAWSCA supports the State Board's evaluation of the proposed Tuolumne River Voluntary Agreement, as described in the November 2022 Revised Memorandum of Understanding presented to the State Board as a possible amendment to the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan (Plan).

BAWSCA represents the 26 water agencies that purchase two-thirds of the water delivered by the San Francisco (Hetch Hetchy) Regional Water System. The BAWSCA member agencies, in turn, provide water to 1.8 million residents, 40,000 businesses, and hundreds of communities in Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties. It is important to understand that BAWSCA was created 22 years ago by the California legislature (AB 2058) to protect and assure a reliable water supply for its constituents.

BAWSCA has been engaged in the process to update the 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 negative impacts to the water customers BAWSCA represents.

The current Plan would result in a very serious loss of up to 90 million gallons of water every day during times of drought from the Regional Water System. Such water losses would result in unacceptable impacts on job growth, a slowdown in the economy, and pose health, safety and economic risks for people, businesses and communities in the BAWSCA region.

While BAWSCA opposed the 2018 adopted Plan, it has consistently supported voluntary agreements. Fortunately, the adopted Bay-Delta Plan provides a policy and legal pathway for a voluntary agreement to implement the Lower San Joaquin River flow portions of the Bay-Delta Plan.

The proposed Voluntary Agreement for the Tuolumne River could be a big step forward in providing more flows and increased habitat for fish in the Tuolumne River and ensuring a continuing reliable supply of high-quality water at a fair price for the health, safety, and economic well-being of BAWSCA's water users.

BAWSCA looks forward to the proposed Voluntary Agreement for the Tuolumne River being carefully analyzed, as a possible amendment to the Bay-Delta Plan, and implemented.

Thank you for initiating this important review and for the opportunity to address you here today.

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