



Statement from Chief Executive Nicole Sandkulla: A Way Forward with a Revised Tuolumne River Voluntary Agreement (TRVA) to Protect the Water Users in Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties is Clearer with Leadership from Governor Newsom and His Senior Staff Who Support Voluntary Agreements to Resolve Water-Supply Issues

November 18, 2021

I had a very helpful discussion with Secretary Crowfoot, and we reviewed his October 20, 2021 letter to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) and others about voluntary-agreement negotiations for the Bay Delta Plan and steps underway to address water-supply issues in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

This information sent a clear message from the California Natural Resources and California Environmental Protection Agencies' (State agencies) perspective that a voluntary agreement remains possible for the Tuolumne River if the Modesto and Turlock Irrigation Districts (Districts) and the SFPUC, who developed the TRVA, will revise it if necessary to meet the threshold requirements for its analysis and approval by the Governor, his team, and the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board). BAWSCA understands that possible revisions to the existing TRVA must consider and balance potential negative impacts to water-supply reliability.

BAWSCA, whose member agencies collectively are the SFPUC's largest water customer, will continue to urge the SFPUC to perform its role and meet its responsibilities to BAWSCA's constituents and qualify the TRVA for the State Board's review and approval. Creativity and action are the essential next steps.

The Districts' proposed plan, based on the TRVA, was selected by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) as the preferred alternative for the recent relicensing of Don Pedro Dam, which is on the Tuolumne River. BAWSCA assumes the Districts', SFPUC's and the State agencies' collective knowledge and skills can develop improvements as necessary for the Tuolumne River to enable the State agencies and the Governor to support submittal of the TRVA to the State Board for analysis and ultimate approval.

The San Francisco Regional Water System relies on the Tuolumne River for 85 percent of its water supply. So, obtaining approval for the TRVA is hugely important given the significant water-supply impacts of the adopted Bay-Delta Plan. Apparently, however, the Newsom administration and the State Board believe that policy makers for the Tuolumne have not included in the current TRVA sufficiently increased water flow and habitat to warrant its official evaluation.

Greater creativity by the Districts, the SFPUC, and the State agencies could address any potential shortage of water and habitat for the fish, while assuring a dependable future water supply for people, businesses, and communities, including for more affordable-housing in the three counties, as well as for San Francisco and the Districts.

BAWSCA appreciates very much the information and guidance provided by Secretaries Blumenfeld and Crowfoot, and Governor Newsom's support for voluntary agreements to resolve water-supply issues, as well as the policy of the State Board, which invites and welcomes voluntary agreements.

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