



Statement from Chief Executive Nicole Sandkulla to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission about its Responsibility to Continue to Provide a Reliable Supply of High-Quality Water at a Fair Price from the Tuolumne River with Adequate Protection for Fish and the Environment

March 22, 2022

Twenty years ago in 2002, the California Legislature ordered the City of San Francisco to rebuild its Regional (Hetch Hetchy) Water System to protect water users in Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties, who depend on it for their water supply from a violent earthquake that could have eliminated delivery of water for up to sixty days. That \$5 billion program is almost finished.

Lawmakers also created the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) to protect the water interests of those 1.8 million residents, 40,000 businesses including most of Silicon Valley, and hundreds of communities in Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties.

On December 12, 2018, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) adopted its Bay Delta Plan, which when implemented, will result in these water users needing to ration up to 50 percent during multiple drought years.

This potentially catastrophic loss of 90 million gallons of water every day is dangerous and unacceptable for water users. But fortunately, there could be an alternative – an agreed upon plan for the Tuolumne River. It can avoid this catastrophe, and as the provider of water from the Tuolumne River, the SFPUC must help resolve this issue with the State resource agencies, the State Board, and other water providers, with improvements for fish and the adjacent environment.

If you do not, the California Legislature will almost certainly have to intervene again to protect these water users. Since Governor Newsom and the State Board welcome and support voluntary agreements, the SFPUC must move forward to secure an agreed upon plan for the Tuolumne River with the State resource agencies that can be submitted to the State Board for analysis as an alternative to the adopted Bay Delta Plan. So, I ask again, what is your plan to deal with this issue now, to meet the State Board's requirements and those from the Governor's office, and to protect our water users?

San Francisco has a perpetual, legal obligation to these water users in the three counties to provide up to 184 million gallons of water per day from its System in line with a legal water-supply agreement, and its operational policies. BAWSCA is your largest customer by far and pays the SFPUC more than \$270 million annually. For that, we expect you to provide our water users with a reliable supply of water at a fair price.

Several legislators in our region are stepping up again to avoid a catastrophic water shortage. And BAWSCA has organized a three-county support team including Mayors of three of the Bay Area's largest cities, leaders of high-technology companies and other vital businesses in Silicon Valley, and labor leaders.

The Commission should confront this issue and act without further delay. It is your responsibility to protect a reliable supply of high-quality water for BAWSCA's water users, and importantly, that there is adequate protection for fish, other wildlife, and the environment.

BAWSCA is ready to work closely with you, members of the Commission, and General Manager Herrera, to meet this challenge. Success now requires action and responsibility at the highest levels of the Commission, the State, and the other suppliers who have water rights on the Tuolumne River.

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