



City of
Los Banos
At the Crossroads of California

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May 27, 2016

Felicia Marcus, Board Chairwoman
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100

Dear Chairwoman Marcus:

As Mayor of the City of Los Banos, I write to you on behalf of the 39,359 residents of Los Banos.

As you prepare to release an updated Substitute Environmental Document for the Bay-Delta Plan, I urge you to heed the requests of numerous cities, counties, and school districts that have already written to you to express their concerns. In an area that is largely dependent on agriculture and has suffered greatly during the drought, a proposal which increases the unimpaired flows from the Stanislaus, Merced, and Tuolumne rivers by 35% demonstrates complete indifference to the people who call the Northern San Joaquin Valley their home.

There can be no question that your Board has failed to include local stakeholders in the development of your plan. To my knowledge, other than conversations with the irrigation districts, there has been only a single meeting in October of 2015 to discuss the proposal with stakeholders. Further, your Board has failed to even respond to the questions raised during that meeting.

Given the serious implications that your plan will have on our area, local stakeholders should have been involved throughout the development phase. By providing local stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on the report only after it is released, you have excluded our area from providing vital information that should have been used as your scientists and technical experts created potential alternatives.

The devastation your plan will have on our area is more than just "significant but unavoidable" impacts. By failing to include us in the development process, your Board has done a serious disservice to an area that already experiences economic challenges and is home to many minority and disadvantaged communities. As a community dependent upon groundwater, your plan directly threatens our quality of life and the safety of our citizens.

I urge you to engage community stakeholders in our area prior to releasing an updated plan. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael Villalta
Mayor
City of Los Banos