



San Luis & Delta Mendota Water Authority

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DRAFT FLOW REPORT FAILS TO ADDRESS BROADER ISSUES Statement by Dan Nelson, Executive Director

The Delta Flow Criteria Report answers the question: If only a few people lived in California and there were no laws, no water rights, no concerns for human health and safety, and no other demands on our water supplies, how much water could be devoted to “desirable fish”?

Fortunately for everyone who lives in California, none of these conditions exist. As the Water Resources Control Board is careful to point out repeatedly, the report includes no balancing of needs, even among competing environmental concerns. Nor was it prepared with any consideration for feasibility or consistency with the public interest. It has no regulatory or adjudicatory effect. It has no impact on anyone’s water rights. It is not even an advisory document – merely informational.

In other words, the draft Delta Flow Criteria Report is a purely theoretical exercise with no application in the real world. Any attempt to apply these findings would be devastating, not only to the people of Southern California but to all of the water users north of the Delta as well, and not only to the small, rural communities and farmers on the Westside but to those on the east side of the San Joaquin Valley too.

Because the board acknowledges the narrow scope of the report and that there was no attempt made to balance competing public trust values, it would be harmful to managed

wetlands, wildlife refuges and a wide range of other environmental concerns as well. And while it makes reference to the “best available science” the fact is that the cutting edge of that science is moving rapidly as we learn more about the harm contaminants, nutrient ratios and predation is having on the overall health of the Delta -- problems no amount of flow can solve.

The value of the report, as the board emphasizes, is to highlight once again the need for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan to develop an integrated, comprehensive, and balanced set of solutions to California’s water needs. Without such a plan to implement comprehensive solutions, including non-flow actions, to benefit our public trust resources, we cannot reasonably hope to recover these desirable fish.

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