



United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504
<http://feinstein.senate.gov>

December 16, 2008

Tam M. Doduc
Chair, State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Karl Longley
Chair, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
11020 Sun Center Drive #200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6114

Dear Ms. Doduc and Mr. Longley:

Following the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's release yesterday of a biological opinion for the Delta smelt, water supplies for more than 24 million Californians and millions of acres of farmland are under historic restrictions for the foreseeable future, threatening an already fragile economic situation.

I strongly believe that a comprehensive regulatory approach is the only option to both restore the Delta ecosystem and achieve a reliable supply of water.

Restricting water supplies alone will do nothing to eliminate other stresses to this vital estuary.

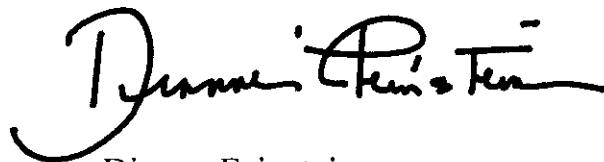
I urge you to take prompt and effective action to address a major part of this complex problem that is within your jurisdiction -- the impact of wastewater discharge in the Delta ecosystem, in particular ammonia discharges from Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District. I ask that you investigate this problem and take action to correct it.

Considerable new research is pointing to the role that ammonia, an ingredient in some wastewater discharges, may be playing in the ecosystem by inhibiting the production of phytoplankton at the base of the food web. As a letter from members of the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force recently pointed out, 10 of the 11 wastewater facilities in the Delta region have implemented new treatment methods to eliminate the discharge of ammonia or are in the process of doing so. The wastewater facility that is not in the process of modernizing its treatment methods is the largest, the facility for the Sacramento area. It is operating under a permit that expired in 2005 while the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board has been processing a new permit application.

I understand that such permit renewals are complex matters in the face of differing views and science which is inevitably imperfect. But the ecosystem is in nothing short of a crisis. The main water supply that fuels the state's economy is in jeopardy. Delaying necessary action is simply not an option. The State Water Resources Control Board and its Central Valley Regional Board have an obligation to protect the Delta and to uphold its policies that seek to limit resource degradation by under-treated wastewater discharge and other threats.

I look forward to working with you in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dianne Feinstein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "D".

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

DF:jw