



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

SEP 15 2009

Dougald Scott, Ph.D.
Chairman, Northern California Council
of the Federation of Fly Fishers, Inc.
116 Allegro Drive
Santa Cruz, California 95060

Dear Dr. Scott:

Thank you for your letter of July 6, 2009, regarding issues of importance to the Department of the Interior, including conditions in the San Joaquin Valley and the Biological Opinions recently issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service on the coordinated operation of the Federal Central Valley Project and the State Water Project. I appreciate the views shared in your letter regarding the agricultural and economic conditions in the San Joaquin Valley.

This Administration is committed to being part of an effort to develop long-term solutions to California's water supply challenges, particularly with regard to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The Bay-Delta ecosystem is a resource of national importance.

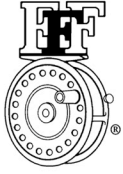
You expressed your hope that Interior will let good science guide our decision-making. One of President Obama's first actions in office was to issue a Memorandum on Scientific Integrity to all Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies. That memorandum clearly states that science and the scientific process must inform and guide the decisions of this Administration. In addition, on the day Secretary Salazar was confirmed, he stated that his "first priority at Interior is to lead the Department with openness in decision-making, high ethical standards, and respect for scientific integrity."

I am honored to have the opportunity to represent the Administration in these discussions. A major reason I returned to public service is my belief that the collaborative process needs to be behind every major resource decision. I am interested in seeking solutions that advance the needs of all affected parties. Thank you for sharing your views with me.

Sincerely,

David J. Hayes

cc: Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor of California
Sacramento, California 95814



Northern California Council of
the Federation of Fly Fishers, Inc.



July 6, 2009

David Hayes, Deputy Secretary
Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: California's Central Valley Water

Dear Deputy Secretary Hayes:

I am the chairman of the Steelhead Committee of the Northern California Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers, Inc. (NCCFFF). The NCCFFF is dedicated to the sport of fly fishing and fish conservation. We have more than 1,000 regular members with about 6,000 members in 31 affiliated clubs throughout northern California. I respectfully request that you consider my comments on behalf of the NCCFFF.

I am writing to respectfully bring to your attention a number of gross exaggerations and outright falsehoods currently being promulgated by the intensive, well funded lobbying/public relations effort by agro-industry interests the San Joaquin Valley. The thrust of their campaign is to blame recent Biological Opinions filed by US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the depressed economy and high unemployment found in the San Joaquin Valley.

The Biological Opinions were developed by expert scientists and based on the best available scientific and commercial information. The call for reducing water exports from the Sacramento San Joaquin Delta is only one of a number of steps necessary for the recovery of threatened and endangered species in the whole Central Valley. However, there is no question that saving the Delta ecosystem is key to making the other steps viable and worthwhile. The call for reduction in Delta water exports is not excessive (5-7%) and is long overdue. In fact, it may be too late to save one of the species in question, Delta Smelt, and Central Valley Steelhead are not far behind.

Information being disseminated by San Joaquin agro-industry interests is at best disingenuous, but often simply untrue. Their purpose is clear; it is to use the current economic crisis to undercut the Endangered Species Act and thereby ensure their access to cheap, subsidized water at the expense of the Delta ecosystem.

They have blamed the San Joaquin Valley's high unemployment woes on reductions in water allotments. Actual employment data do not support this claim. San Joaquin Valley unemployment rates have always been high, but during the current economic crisis the agricultural sector has actually fared better than other sectors in these counties. Furthermore, farm communities north of the Delta, which are receiving full water allotments, are suffering similar employment impacts.

David Hayes, Deputy Secretary

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Other agro-industry rhetoric would imply that San Joaquin Valley farmers are receiving only 10% of the water they need to grow their crops. In fact, by tapping into other sources (wells, transfers, hold-over storage), water agencies serving these counties have delivered an average of 85% of a normal water year. Many of those receiving lower allotments (west side farms) have junior water rights and are not guaranteed water deliveries in low water years. It is important to note that the west side farms have always known that water was unlikely in drought years, due to their most junior water rights. It should not be the Delta ecosystem or taxpayer responsibility to bale them out after making bad farming decisions like planting permanent crops – nuts, citrus, grapes or fruit trees.

I am confident that you will carefully consider the science behind the NMFS and FWS Biological Opinions, and find the 5-7% reduction in water exports is crucial to the recovery of the Delta ecosystem, and the threatened and endangered species that depend upon it. We'd also like to offer our support for science based decision making at DOI in the months ahead. We know the decisions will be difficult, and some may suffer in the short run. However, balancing water needs in California for both people and the environment is the key to long term success and stability. We encourage you to realize that the San Joaquin agriculture districts have more financial and political leverage than other constituencies can muster. We hope you'll let good science guide decision making, and not fall prey to the political pressures being applied.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dougald Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Dougald Scott, Ph.D.

Northern California Council Federation of Fly Fishers, Inc.

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cc: Secretary Ken Salazar

Department of the Interior

1849 C Street, N.W.

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Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger

State of California

State Capitol, First Floor

Sacramento, CA 95814