



ADAM GRAY FOR ASSEMBLY 2016

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Water Board Declares Water War on Merced and Stanislaus Counties

(Sacramento) – Assemblymember Adam C. Gray (D-Merced) issued the following statement regarding the revised Substitute Environmental Document for the Bay-Delta Plan update.

“The new recommendation by the State Water Board to require 40% unimpaired flows on the Tuolumne, Merced, and Stanislaus rivers amounts to an economic death sentence.

Since the update to the Bay-Delta Plan began, the State Water Board has spent millions of dollars on staff and consultants rewriting the report. After all this time and expense, and during one of the worst droughts in California’s history, it appears that the Water Board’s only significant change was to demand even more water.

It is a report which does not reflect the realities of the world we live in and could only be written by a government agency operating behind closed doors which has turned a deaf ear to the

communities which will ultimately pay the highest price. This callous disregard is unprecedented in California history. To this day, the State Water Board has not responded to the concerns raised by our local schools, businesses, and local governments.

In their report, the State Water Board expresses hope for settlement discussions. I have encouraged such discussions between the state and local stakeholders. But it takes both parties, acting in good faith, to conduct them. Instead, we have a situation where the State Water Board demands that the most economically challenged part of the state decimate its economy to restore salmon, while the California Fish and Game Commission refuses to reduce invasive predators like bass that are responsible for so much of the reduction in salmon populations in the first place.

For settlement discussions to be successful, Chairwoman Felicia Marcus needs to direct her staff and consultants to meet with local interests and discuss in detail their assumptions, data, and conclusions. There must be an acknowledgment of the significant adverse impacts removing so much water from our area will have on our economy, and there must be a willingness on behalf of the state to mitigate that impact. Nowhere else in California would a change of such magnitude and consequence be considered without extensive mitigation as part of the discussion.

Despite needing four years to rewrite this report themselves, the Water Board is giving us just over 60 days to respond by concluding the comment period on November 15th. It is highly unlikely that the local community can conduct an in-depth review of the report and its predecessor, reconcile the assumptions and data, and draft a thoughtful and thorough response if the lack communication and cooperation from the Water Board continues.

If the preference for a settlement is truly genuine, Chairwoman Marcus should address these problems.”

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Assemblymember Adam C. Gray represents the 21st Assembly District which includes all of Merced County and portions of Stanislaus County.