



May 20, 2021

Joaquin Esquivel, Chair  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Temperature Protections for Sacramento River Salmon**

Dear Chair Esquivel:

We are writing to urge the Board to take strong and immediate action to avoid a catastrophic loss of salmon in the Sacramento River this fall. We understand that modelling by the National Marine Fisheries Service has revealed that the current proposed operating plan for Shasta Dam could result in lethal temperatures that could kill the vast majority of naturally spawning Winter-run and Fall-run Chinook salmon below the dam this fall.

We urge you to explore every opportunity to improve temperature conditions for salmon this year – including options that would require reductions in water deliveries.

We are particularly concerned about this issue because of the near complete loss of naturally spawning Sacramento River salmon in 2014-2015. Our salmon runs have not yet recovered from that disaster – which was widely seen as a major management failure during the past drought. Indeed, that experience is one reason the Public Policy Institute of California concluded that natural resources – and by extension the fishing community – suffered the greatest impacts during that drought. We urge you not to allow that same mistake to be made again.

We fully appreciate the hardships that drought conditions are imposing on some water users. However, we urge you to also consider seriously the hardship that another disastrous juvenile salmon kill could impose on natural resources, tribes and salmon fishing jobs, families and communities – including in our districts.

Joaquin Esquivel

May 20, 2021

Page 2

As you know, Sacramento Valley salmon runs are the backbone of California's recreational and commercial salmon fishing industries. For the winter-run – a run listed under the state and federal ESAs – another disastrous year could be particularly damaging. And California's Tribes, for which salmon is an important part of their culture, diet and religious practices, the threat to salmon this year is particularly concerning.

Fishing communities are reeling because of a poor 2020-2021 crab fishing season, a severely restricted 2021 salmon season and the slow recovery from the 2014-2015 disaster. They cannot absorb another such disaster.

Your agency is charged with protecting these critical public resources. Indeed, the Board is the only agency with the regulatory authority to ensure that water operations protect Fall-run salmon and the fishing industry.

Please inform our offices as soon as you have made a final decision on temperature management for the year. In addition, please inform our offices of the Fall and Winter-run mortality levels you anticipate will result from that decision.

We stand ready to assist the State Board in the difficult challenge of managing California's water resources during this drought. If you have any questions, please feel to contact me at (916) 651-4002.

Warmest Regards,



---

MIKE MCGUIRE  
Senator, District 2



---

JIM WOOD  
Assemblymember, District 2



---

SCOTT WEINER  
Senator, District 11



---

MARK STONE  
Assemblymember, District 29