California State Senate

SENATOR MIKE MCGUIRE

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S SECOND SENATE DISTRICT

August 7, 2015

Felicia Marcus, Chair
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100

Re: **Follow-up to the Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture Hearing**

Dear Chairwoman Marcus, Felicia

First off, I would like to say congratulations on your reappointment to the State Water Resources Control Board. Your service to this State, especially during this historic drought, is greatly appreciated.

On behalf of the Committee, I want to thank Executive Director Howard for his participation in the Annual Hearing. His testimony was greatly appreciated.

I wanted to follow-up on several critical items discussed at the July 1 hearing. We urge the Board to make the protection of our vulnerable salmon runs and future fisheries a high priority during the current drought.

We heard testimony that current and future conditions could produce a salmon fishery "disaster." The Board's salmon protection requirements, particularly for the Sacramento River, are critical to avoiding such a disaster and assisting with the recovery of salmon runs following the end of the drought.

Executive Director Howard recently approved the Bureau of Reclamation's modified Sacramento River Temperature Management Plan. We are concerned that this order allows river temperatures that are already to exceed 56 degrees, the maximum temperature to avoid negatively impacting salmon reproduction. We urge the Board to ensure that no further action is taken to weaken temperature protections for Sacramento River salmon runs during the spawning season and to alert us if such actions are contemplated.

We further urge the Board to heed the recent recommendation of the Public Policy Institute of California to include a margin of safety in designing requirements for temperature protection on

important California salmon rivers[1]. Without such a margin of safety, any deviation from modeling data or unexpected development, such as those experienced this year and last, can result in unacceptable impacts to salmon and other natural resources.

We recognize your attempts to improve the Sacramento River Temperature model and temperature sensors to provide for better decision-making and a higher level of protection for salmon this year and in the future. We request the Board keep us informed on improvements to the accuracy of the model and on efforts to calculate cumulative estimated bi-weekly mortality of both winter-run and fall-run chinook.

Additionally, we ask you carefully review and report back to us on the rapid decrease, or ramping down, of Shasta releases, which results in dewatering incubating salmon eggs and strands fall and winter run salmon fry.

Lastly, we appreciate your desire to protect salmon through the Russian River Emergency Regulations and remain interested in the data sharing component of well reporting. We request you provide us with specifics of how this will be implemented.

Ensuring the adequate protection of salmon is an economic as well as an environmental issue. The closure of salmon fishing in 2008 and 2009 resulted in the loss of over 20,000 jobs and economic losses of 1.4 billion dollars. A restored salmon fishery would provide additional jobs and economic activity. We urge your prompt attention to ensure maximum salmon protection this year, prevent a possible third disaster in the coming spawning season, avoid potential devastating closures and protect our current and future fisheries. We look forward to your response. If we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me personally or Committee Consultant, Tom Weseloh, at (707) 445-6508.

I look forward to working with you in the months and years to come!

Warmest Regards,

MIKE McGUIRE
Senator

Chairwoman –
Thank you for your leadership during our State's historic drought. I look forward to working with you on these important issues.

[1] Jeffrey Mount, PPIC. "Better Reservoir Management Would Take the Heat off Salmon." June 23, 2015 Accessed at http://www.ppic.org/main/blog_detail.asp?i=1801