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SENATOR
CATHLEEN GALGIANI
FIFTH SENATE DISTRICT



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October 31, 2016

Ms. Felicia Marcus
Chairwoman
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812

RE: Bay-Delta Supplemental Environmental Document

Dear Chairwoman Marcus:

I have serious reservations regarding the Bay-Delta SED released in September. My first concern is with the public comment process for a proposal with such serious impacts to the areas involved. Although I appreciate the 60-day extension to the original 60-day comment period, I agree with my colleagues that it places these important hearings right before the holiday period when many people have family commitments and many are already traveling. I agree with my fellow legislators from the area that these hearings should be scheduled for January along with an additional 30-day extension on the comment period.

I believe that this extended period of time is reasonable for the affected parties to thoroughly review and respond to a complex 4,000 page report compiled over 4 years suggesting a significant reallocation of water from the three rivers that will have dire impacts on the three-county area and beyond.

Already, local studies and estimates suggest that the assumptions in the SED in regard to the impacts on the local economy, groundwater, drinking water, agricultural production are greatly under estimated while the potential for improvement to the salmon maybe very speculative.

SWRCB staff presentations to the Merced and Stanislaus boards of supervisors included a suggestion that the best approach would be to work with our water agencies to achieve the desired goals rather than spend years and monetary resources in litigation. The Merced Irrigation District has recently released their S.A.F.E. proposal which seems to be a big step in this direction. I think this kind of a cooperative and comprehensive program with all parties working together would be a much more productive way to move toward the boards' goals.

A plan that does not take into account 165 years of alterations to the Delta and the rivers that feed it, as well as the introduction of invasive species and subsequent predation, seems unlikely to succeed on its own without the expertise and assistance of our local water agencies.

A report released last year by four Delta lead scientists on the challenges and recommendations for managing the Delta, stated:

“If the problem were just about allocating fresh flows, it might be solvable. Add in the complexity of moving water through a hydrodynamically complex Delta, it becomes complicated. Add the uncertainty of ecological response and the institutional complexity of many actors with many visions and the problem becomes wicked. Then add the ever changing water supply and ecological and economic contexts within which decisions must be made and the problem becomes devilishly wicked.”

I respectfully request that the SWRCB extend the comment period another 30 days to February and reschedule the Merced, Modesto and Stockton hearings to January dates.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathleen Galgiani". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cathleen Galgiani
Senator, 5th District