



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

February 17, 2020

The Honorable David Bernhardt
Secretary of Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary,

As you travel to California this week to engage in water policy discussions, I want to underscore my commitment to protecting our environment while maintaining our state's economic vitality. Over the last year, we have set a pathway to improve the health of our waterways and recover our fish populations while building water supply reliability. In this effort, we have benefited from the engagement of federal agencies.

Our endangered salmon and other native fish populations are imperiled and in urgent need of our help. In response, we need to take extraordinary action. At the same time, our farmers face major water constraints as they bring groundwater use into balance and our growing communities need reliable water. Our actions must balance these needs.

For more than a year, we have worked together to find a comprehensive solution for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta, which are voluntary agreements to immediately improve environmental conditions, create more certainty for the 35 million Californians who depend on these water sources, and maintain the economic vitality of the Central Valley. Federal agencies' engagement in this effort has been critical to establishing a framework for these agreements and remains crucial as we flesh-out this framework into detailed agreements.

Since November, our state and federal agencies have been working to bridge significant differences regarding the proposed federal Biological Opinions—the rules that govern water infrastructure in the Bay Delta to protect endangered fish. Our dialogue has generated progress toward an aligned approach that provides appropriate flexibility to move water in certain wet conditions while doing all that is needed to adequately protect imperiled fish. We have not yet fully resolved our differences as federal agencies prepare to take action to activate these new rules. However, we remain committed to working to resolve these remaining differences in coming weeks and months.

Finding common solutions to these complex water challenges is essential. Our intertwined state and federal infrastructure demand harmonized management. Our water users rely on us to work together to reliably provide water. Recovering our fish populations requires

our state and federal environmental agencies to work together and use all tools at their disposal.

As our respective agencies roll-out actions this week, I want to convey our commitment to staying engaged and working to find a shared path forward that protects our environment in a way that enables continued economic prosperity.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom
Governor of California

CC:

Brenda Burman, Commissioner, United States Bureau of Reclamation
Ernest Conant, Regional Director, United State Bureau of Reclamation
Paul Souza, Regional Director, United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Barry Thom, Regional Director, National Marine Fisheries Service
Jared Blumenfeld, Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency
Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency