

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 8, 2015

Mr. Estevan López
Commissioner
Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240-0001

Dear Commissioner Lopez:

Several weeks ago, with your participation, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Oakdale and South San Joaquin Irrigation Districts reached an agreement on 2015 water operations.

The parties to the agreement painstakingly drafted a Temporary Urgency Change Petition to the State Water Resources Control Board with the realization that any amendment to the TUCP would very likely unwind the delicate balance settled upon by all parties.

The proposed TUCP calls for the districts to receive 450,000 acre feet of water and for 115,000 acre feet of water to remain behind New Melones Reservoir at the end of September 2015.

In your testimony before the Subcommittee on Water, Power, and Oceans on March 24th, you committed to those figures on the record, stating that, “[T]here was agreement between our regional office and the districts about the minimal amount of supply that they would be provided. I believe that’s 450,000 acre feet... There’s an agreement that we should keep something on the order of 110,000 or 115,000 acre feet in [New Melones] to prevent deadpool.”

While the SWRCB has conditionally approved the TUCP, final approval of the petition as drafted has not been granted and is in serious danger after NMFS requested additional carryover storage behind New Melones.

We are very troubled that despite the lack of final approval of the districts’ emergency petition, Reclamation has now ordered another pulse flow.

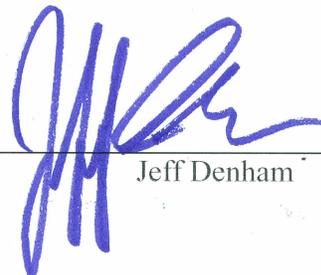
Ordering the increase in flows for environmental purposes while there are serious doubts about the final approval of the agreed-upon TUCP once again raises the specter of devastating water disruptions to local communities. Moreover, it calls into question whether Reclamation and NMFS have in fact been working with local water districts in good faith or simply paying lip service to basic standards of good government while pursuing a grossly negligent policy that would rob senior water rights holders.

We urge you to abide by the terms that Reclamation has negotiated to which you re-stated your commitment on the record in March and rescind the most recent release order. Furthermore, we ask that Reclamation direct its efforts towards ensuring a speedy approval of the districts’ emergency petition.

Sincerely,



Tom McClintock



Jeff Denham