

April 5, 2016

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

Dear Chairwoman Marcus:

As Superintendents of the Stanislaus and Merced County Offices of Education, we write to you on behalf of the 157,000 students who live within our districts. With double-digit unemployment and poverty rates of 18% and 25% respectively, Stanislaus and Merced counties face some of the greatest challenges in the state as we endeavor to provide educational opportunities for the children of our area.

We are both concerned and disappointed that the State Water Quality Control Board is now in the process of updating the Bay-Delta Plan, but has failed to contact anyone from our offices to discuss how the plan will affect our students, who, with small exception, rely on groundwater as their source of drinking water. The 2012 draft of the plan stated that there would be "significant, but unavoidable" impacts on our area, but contained no proposal to mitigate those impacts.

Let us be clear. The detrimental impacts of the Board's plan will be felt strongly by the children that we serve. Many of our students come from socioeconomically disadvantaged households. We work hard to ensure that we remove as many obstacles as possible in an effort to ensure that all students have the opportunity to excel academically. It appears that you have done no analysis of how your plan will impact our students, despite spending millions of dollars in staff time and consultant costs to date. In your years of work on this plan, it is unclear why you have not taken the time to study the financial implications to school districts that would be forced to provide bottled water and portable toilets, or relocate schools entirely, as wells go dry.

As educators, we understand that it is imperative to provide safe and healthy environments for our children to learn. Our schools also often serve as safe places for both students and the community members to gather, especially in rural areas. Access to drinking water and water for sanitation is a basic requirement for us to fulfill our mandate to provide quality education to the children of our districts.

We take that mandate very seriously, as we believe that it implicates each student's right to an education and equal treatment under the law. We do not believe that you have the authority to unilaterally implement your proposed plan without a full analysis of the impacts to educational institutions in the affected areas, as well as a defined plan to mitigate those impacts.

In an effort to make sure you are aware of our concerns, this letter is to inform you that we have directed our legal counsel to be prepared to challenge your report, unless it contains a full and complete analysis of its impacts on the educational opportunities within the Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced River basins.

As you work to finalize the upcoming draft of the Bay-Delta Plan, we encourage you to keep the children of Stanislaus and Merced counties in mind. As always, we remain open to discussing our concerns with you further.

Sincerely,



Tom Changnon  
Stanislaus County Superintendent of Schools



Steven E. Gomes, Ed.D.  
Merced County Superintendent of Schools