



DON'T BET THE FARM:

WATER BOARD SHOULD HOLD OFF ON RECKLESS TEMPERATURE PLAN

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is scheduled to consider a new “staff” proposal next week to protect imperiled salmon. The plan calls for setting aside substantially more water in 2016 in an attempt to benefit fish.

The plan comes as the SWRCB is already discussing another year of tough water restrictions and State Water Project deliveries are currently set at just 10 percent. With increasingly scarce water valued at over \$1,000 per acre-foot last year, the proposal amounts to a \$200 million high-risk *gamble*.

Action on the plan is not only premature but lacks any foundation in sound science. The plan appears to suggest simply throwing increasingly scarce water at the problem without knowing if it will actually benefit the salmon.

Consider the following:

- Similar efforts the past two years have failed to show any measurable benefit to struggling salmon populations.
- There is absolutely no compelling reason to make a decision now that can be made when more complete information is available.
- Data on salmon populations for 2015 remain preliminary, until final numbers are available early next year and can be properly considered by the Board and reviewed by all the stakeholders, any action is clearly premature.
- Last year's efforts were stymied when federal regulators realized in late spring that their temperature monitoring equipment wasn't working properly.
- Independent fish biologists are highly skeptical the plan will achieve the desired result.
 - While we have received early precipitation, the effects of El Niño are still largely unknown.



Before the SWRCB decides to throw yet another 200,000 acre-feet of increasingly scarce water at the salmon, it would be wise to get all the facts straight and require staff to show scientific proof that the effort will actually achieve the desired benefit to imperiled fish.

Without both the facts and the science, the State Board is *gambling* with precious water that could otherwise be made available to farms and residents that have received greatly reduced water supplies during this historic four-year drought.

Bottom line: the State Board shouldn't bet the farm on a premature and reckless staff recommendation and should wait to get all the facts and analysis they need to make a fully informed decision.