

December 3, 2020

Members of the State Water Resources Control Board  
c/o Ms. Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
P.O. Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

Re: Comments – Limited Order for Yuba River Development Project Certification

Dear Chair Esquivel, Vice Chair D'Adamo and Board Members Doduc, Firestone and Maguire:

I am writing to share my unequivocal support for Yuba Water Agency, a vital and committed leader for all of Yuba County, critical to our children's future. I respectfully ask that the State Water Resources Control Board vacate the water quality certification issued in July for the Yuba River Development Project given the harmful and lasting impact it will have for Yuba County students. Indeed, this issue carries detrimental implications for a brighter future for our youth and families made possible by the Yuba Water Agency.

As the Superintendent of Schools for Yuba County, I can share that historically we have struggled to provide viable opportunities for our youth and families given the economic constraints across our diverse communities. Clearly, it has not been for lack of talent, creativity, passion, or commitment. We have that in abundance. More to the point, the challenge has been identifying sources of sustainable funding to update and improve our facilities, expand our curriculum, hire educators and staff, and engage all our Yuba County stakeholders in an educational strategy that truly brings hope.

Approximately, 80% percent of Yuba County's students are from disadvantaged communities. In fact, the poverty in our schools is so significant, three of our five school districts offer free lunch to all their students. Given that a significant population of our students come from communities experiencing poverty and academic challenges, the Yuba Water Agency has been committed to improving Yuba County's quality of life as an involved regional leader.

Since the expiration of a 50-year contract with PG&E to pay off the bonds used to build New Bullards Bar Dam and New Colgate Powerhouse, Yuba Water Agency is now earning hydropower revenue and reinvesting those funds back into Yuba County communities.

Clearly, the Yuba Water Agency's impact on our communities has been powerful. From project inception to visioning, and from broad community involvement to strategic planning, I've had the opportunity to be a part of Yuba Water Agency's dream of bringing the best educational opportunities to our youth. This collaborative effort has involved many stakeholders including the Yuba County Office of Education, all county school districts, and the South Yuba River Citizens League. This year we have actually begun to see those seeds yield the first hint of fruitful progress.

Thanks to substantial investments from Yuba Water Agency, many of our teachers have received specialized training and are becoming experts in Next Generation Science Standard curriculum development. They've worked in collaborative teams to create lessons that educate our students about our watershed, atmospheric rivers, the history of hydraulic mining and flooding in our area, and more.

Until this year, Next Generation Science Standard curriculum is something that's been critically lacking in all our schools. More than 200 lessons were developed this summer, touching every single grade.

That curriculum is now being field tested in limited classrooms and amended as the teachers find opportunities to improve upon it. Next year, it will be disseminated to every school in Yuba County with the hope of expanding the lessons and providing additional professional development opportunities for additional teachers.

Additionally, the master planning process is underway for a water education center on the Yuba River that will bring all these lessons together with hands-on, interactive experiences for the students, many who come from economically challenged circumstances with limited opportunities for educational field trips. This facility will be a game changer for Yuba County, educating our students and the public, and helping to ensure our community truly understands and appreciates the incredible asset we have in the Yuba River.

In this first year of planning and curriculum development, Yuba Water has invested more than \$1 million dollars, with tens of millions more expected in the coming years, as we build upon this dream.

Moreover, the Yuba Water Agency is also engaging with some of our school districts to work on large-scale water conservation projects, to preserve our groundwater, and help the schools save significant funds that can go toward other necessary facility improvements or education needs.

In closing, I want to underscore the vital role the Yuba Water Agency is playing in Yuba County's future. My understanding of this water quality certification is that if it is allowed to stand as-is, it could have devastating impacts on Yuba Water Agency's revenue, and thus their ability to fund these critical projects. Our students deserve to finally have the opportunities afforded so many other more affluent districts. We are doing such good work – please allow this dream to continue unfolding and truly serve our students and families.

Respectfully,

Francisco Reveles, Ed.D.  
Yuba County Superintendent of Schools