January 10, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of the State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 900
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Request to Increase South of the Delta State Water Exports

Dear Governor Newsom,

The elevated runoff throughout the State from repeated heavy precipitation events from late-December through early January has caused flooding conditions throughout the State of California. Inflows to the Delta have increased to levels that haven't been observed since April of 2019. The Sacramento River is hemorrhaging below the dams. The state opened a weir to draw excess flows into the Yolo Bypass for the first time since 2017. Folsom Dam releases have been bumped up to 35,000 cubic feet-per-second (cfs).

Despite this, as a result of the 2019 Biological Opinions and the 2020 Incidental Take Permit State Water Project, exports have been drastically cut by more than 50% from approximately 6,000 cfs on December 31st to a daily average well under 3,000 cfs through January 8th, according to The Bureau of Reclamation's Central Valley Operations Office Delta Outflow Computation Report. After several years of drought and low reservoir levels, it only makes sense to capitalize on wet conditions by maximizing south of the Delta exports at a time when the water is available. This is no time to be 'dialing back the pumps' as mentioned by Director Karla Nemeth last week.

As of January 8, 2023, Delta inflow was approximately 92,000 cfs and Delta outflow was approximately 86,000 cfs. With so much excess water in the system, there is no reason that exports south of the Delta cannot be increased. Future weather forecasts indicate dry conditions later in the month of January, which support and highlight the need to increase exports and conserve this valuable resource before Delta inflows recede.

We urgently ask you to relax the unnecessary Delta pumping restrictions and increase exports south of the Delta immediately.

Sincerely,

Melissa Hurtado
Senator, 16th District

Jasmeet Bains
Assemblymember, 35th District