

Thank you, Chair Esquivel and Members of the Board. I am Dr. Eddie Ocampo, Director of Community Sustainability at Self-Help Enterprises, a community development organization that works with low-income families to build and sustain healthy homes and communities in the San Joaquin Valley. I am also the volunteer chair of the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley.

The Blueprint is a coalition of community leaders, businesses, water agencies, local governments, and agricultural representatives working together to address water management challenges in the region. The Blueprint speaks as a unified voice for the San Joaquin Valley to advance accessible, reliable solutions for a balanced water future for all.

The Blueprint strongly supports Healthy Rivers and Landscapes as the preferred approach to amending the Bay Delta Plan. The Healthy Rivers and Landscapes option was proposed by a diverse group of stakeholders, including State, Federal, and local partners, non-profits, and irrigation and water districts. It offers a balanced solution that protects native fish species while ensuring water supply reliability and regulatory certainty for California communities.

In contrast, the unimpaired flow objectives would cause severe social and economic disruptions. It would lead to significant water supply reductions and result in fallowing of an additional 260,000 acres of agricultural land over and above the expected 700,000 acres expected to be fallowed due to the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. This unprecedented level of fallowing will result in substantial economic losses for communities and the people who depend on agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley.

The Healthy Rivers and Landscapes pathway includes increased instream flow and Delta outflow paired with habitat restoration measures. It is supported by \$2.6 billion in funding, along with robust monitoring and adaptive management.

This approach is likely to achieve better protection for native fish than unimpaired flows and does so without the detrimental water supply reductions and damaging impacts on the San Joaquin Valley and its communities.

The Water Blueprint urges the Board to adopt the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes alternative. It provides a viable alternative that balances environmental, economic, and social values and ensures a sustainable future for California water.

Thank you