



**Brian J. Johnson**

Director, California Water Project  
Staff Attorney

February 4, 2008

Kimberly D. Bose  
Secretary  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20426

Re: Don Pedro Project # 2299

Dear Secretary Bose:

On behalf of Trout Unlimited's more than 150,000 members nation-wide and over 10,000 members in California, I am writing to comment on the Districts' Fisheries Study Plan, as submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and to request that the Commission take quick action to approve a final fisheries study plan that includes the recommendations of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service so that studies may commence this spring. The mission of Trout Unlimited is conserve, protect, restore and sustain North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds, and we strongly urge the Commission to make no further delays in protecting the resources of the lower Tuolumne River.

Upon review of documents and comments submitted by the Districts, Agencies and non-governmental organizations, we believe that the current Districts' Study Plan is inadequate to resolve outstanding information gaps in the record and to protect and restore both the Fall Run Chinook Salmon and Central Valley Steelhead.

Existing data suggest the fish are in trouble, and FERC must act to assure that the new license will include a flow schedule that will protect and restore the fisheries. The 2007 Fall Run Chinook Salmon escapement is estimated at only 113 salmon, a number that will not sustain this Species of Concern. In addition, this number is far below the Central Valley Project Improvement Act's Anadromous Fish Restoration Project population goal of an average of 38,000 salmon for the Tuolumne. The escapement results over the past few years represent a long-term decline and justify the need for a comprehensive study plan that scientifically determines instream requirements for both salmon and steelhead.

Although the Central Valley Steelhead population is listed, there is a lack of research evaluating current population status, survival rates, and other factors critical to its recovery as required by the Endangered Species Act. We urge that the Study Plan include comprehensive studies of these factors, like those included in the recommendations of the FWS and NMFS, to better understand the population dynamics of the Central Valley Steelhead.

We also urge the Commission to require that the Study Plan include the recommendations of the Agencies (NMFS, FWS, DFG) with regard to adequate flows for salmon smolt production. Flows undoubtedly affect the production of smolts and the number of returning adults to the Tuolumne River. In addition, the life history of Central Valley steelhead specifically requires higher year-round minimum flows since the steelhead juveniles can remain in the river for several years or even become resident as adults (rather than anadromous). Flow management is critical to improving the quality and quantity of habitat for salmon juveniles and outmigrating smolts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Johnson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brian Johnson

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