

August 21, 2013

Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee
1020 N Street, Room 160
Sacramento, California 95814

Via electronic mail: Tina.Leahy@asm.ca.gov

Re: Comments of American Rivers on 2013 Water Bond Framework

Dear Assembly Water Parks and Wildlife Committee:

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the 2013 Water Bond Framework (Framework). We are pleased to know this committee and other members are making efforts to develop a bond to fund important work to restore and protect California's great rivers and other water resources, especially as previous bond funds are nearly depleted. We respectfully offer the following comments and recommendations:

1. The current version of the Framework does not include funding for flood protection actions needed to implement the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) reports that most of the funds made available through past bond acts have been allocated. At least \$25 billion is anticipated to be necessary to fully implement the Plan. American Rivers and more than dozen partner conservation organizations have been working very closely with local flood agencies and the DWR to adopt a more modern flood management approach that better protects our communities and infrastructure from floods and also benefits fish, wildlife and recreation. This multi-benefit approach will be stopped in its tracks without significant funds in the Water Bond. Water Bond language proposed in the Senate (e.g., SB42) contains funding for flood management, and we believe that it is essential that the Assembly version does as well.
2. The current version of SB 84 establishes "multi-benefit" water projects as a priority for appropriation. Assuming that funds are added to the Water Bond for these purposes, we recommend that similar language is included in the Assembly version.
3. American Rivers believes significant increases in water dedicated to instream flows in Delta tributaries and Delta outflows will be required to put the Delta on a path to recovery and our water supply system on a more reliable footing. The proposed SB 42 includes funding for projects that result in a permanent transfer of water rights. We recommend the Framework provide significant funding for such transfers.
4. The Klamath Basin restoration settlement agreements, signed by Governor Schwarzenegger in February 2010, calls for California to contribute funds, up to \$250

million, for dam removal and restoration costs in excess of the \$200 million dam removal trust fund currently being collected from PacifiCorp customers. Current estimate indicate costs for California under this arrangement would likely range between \$50 million and \$100 million. Without California's contribution, the Klamath restoration settlement agreements cannot proceed, and the substantial benefits that would accrue to California would be lost. We request the Framework include funding to support California's commitment to the Klamath restoration agreements.

5. The Framework appears to "Terminate authorization for Water Bond Funds not yet appropriated." We are not clear why this provision was added but if the intention of the Framework is to rescind the authority to sell unsold bonds or not utilize these funds as authorized by the voters, we do not support this provision and request it be struck.

For additional information, please feel free to contact me or my staff at (530) 277-0448.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Rothert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steve Rothert
Director, California Regional Office