

MEMORANDUM

TO: NSV IRWMP Board of Directors

FROM: Tony St. Amant (tsainta@hotmail.com)

SUBJECT: Voluntary moratorium on out-of-region water transfers

DATE: May 2, 2013

The NSV IRWMP Board has no authority beyond development of the region's integrated water management plan, yet the Board is unique in its broad-based representation of North State water interests. There is no other entity that can so validly express the breadth of water-related North State views and values as the NSV Board. Accordingly, there is a potential for the Board to effectively influence water policy without regard to administrative boundaries or actual statutory authority.

An issue that could benefit immediately from the Board's influence is the potential for north-south water transfers that could go forward before the NSV organization has had a chance to develop the water transfer guidelines envisioned by proposed IRWMP objective 1-5¹. In the works are the USBR-San Luis & Delta-Mendota proposal to transfer 600,000 acre feet/year for ten years, the Butte Water District proposal to transfer 5,350 AF of surface water and backfill its needs with groundwater it wouldn't otherwise use, and the GCID proposal to transfer 5,000 AF of groundwater to the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority this year.

While the GCID and Butte Water District transfers are comparatively trivial, one has to wonder about the real reason GCID is planning to transfer a mere 5,000 AF of groundwater this year to an organization that services over two million acres of land and delivers three million acre feet of water a year. Could independent out-of-region groundwater transfers set a precedent that might be impossible to overcome when the IRWM follow-on organization is finally up and running? Were that to be the case, it could defeat completely the vision² of this organization with so much promise for defense and sustainability of Northern Sacramento Valley water resources.

The NSV IRWMP Board could offer an alternative approach.

Request the Board place this item on its June 3 agenda with the following potential actions:

1. Seek voluntary imposition of a moratorium on out-of-region water transfers by irrigation districts in the NSV IRWMP six-county area until July 1, 2014. (Atch 1)
2. Commitment to produce regional water transfer guidelines by April 1, 2014 with participation by all interested institutional and non-institutional stakeholders. (Atch 1)
2. Seek a resolution supporting a voluntary moratorium on out-of-region water transfers from the Board of Supervisors of each of the six NSV IRWMP counties (Atch 2).

¹ Objective 1-5: Develop regional water transfer guidelines to facilitate efficient management of water supplies that recognize the NSV Region as having the first priority for use as feasible. (Foundational)

² "To establish a regional collaborative structure with the objective of ensuring an affordable, sustainable water supply that supports agricultural, business, environmental, recreational, and domestic needs of the Northern Sacramento Valley."

PROPOSED LETTER

NSV IRWMP BOARD TO NORTHERN SACRAMENTO VALLEY IRRIGATION DISTRICTS

To: Chair, Board of Directors, _____ Irrigation District

The governing board of Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (NSV IRWMP) has no authority to impose any policy or restriction on any local entity, nor does it anticipate ever having such authority. Yet the Board is tasked with developing a collaborative regional plan with the vision of ensuring an affordable, sustainable water supply that supports agricultural, business, environmental, recreational, and domestic needs of the Northern Sacramento Valley.

The Board, with the support of our technical advisory committee, staff members and elected officials from six north valley counties, a highly qualified consultant, and a diverse base of public participation is working hard to produce a quality document as soon as we can. We hope to be substantially complete before the end of the year. We foresee greatly improved leverage for our under-populated region from a collaborative approach to water policy. Hopefully, you share that vision.

But time doesn't stand still while we are staffing, coordinating, and taking public testimony on the new IRWMP. The policy process goes on in Sacramento and issues arise in the region that might be dealt with collaboratively under the IRWMP were it complete. One issue of particular interest is the long-term implications of out-of-region water transfers.

One of the foundational objectives of the IRWMP is to "develop regional water transfer guidelines to facilitate efficient management of water supplies that recognize the NSV Region as having the first priority for use as feasible." We intend to pursue that objective as a matter of priority, but the pressure for out-of-region water transfers continues to rise, and transfers are contemplated for this year that could set precedents that would undermine a regional approach.

Consequently, the NSV IRWMP Board is calling on all irrigation districts within the boundaries of the six participating counties to voluntarily declare a moratorium on out-of-region water transfers until July 1, 2014. We are asking the Boards of Supervisors of the six counties to endorse this voluntary moratorium. With the cooperation and participation of all interested institutional and non-institutional stakeholders, we are committed to having regional water transfer guidelines completed by April 1, 2014.

We urge you to join the voluntary moratorium in the spirit of regional collaboration. Please let the NSV Board know of your intentions.

Sincerely,

Chair, Northern Sacramento Valley
IRWMP Board of Directors

PROPOSED LETTER

TRANSMITTING SUGGESTED RESOLUTION TO COUNTY BOARDS OF SUPERVISORS

To: Chair, _____ County Board of Supervisors

The governing board of Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (NSV IRWMP) has no authority to impose any policy or restriction on any local entity, nor does it anticipate ever having such authority. Yet the Board is tasked with developing a collaborative regional plan with the vision of ensuring an affordable, sustainable water supply that supports agricultural, business, environmental, recreational, and domestic needs of the Northern Sacramento Valley.

The Board, with the support of our technical advisory committee, staff members and elected officials from six north valley counties, a highly qualified consultant, and a diverse base of public participation is working hard to produce a quality document as soon as we can. We hope to be substantially complete before the end of the year. We foresee greatly improved leverage for our under-populated region from a collaborative approach to water policy. Hopefully, you share that vision.

But time doesn't stand still while we are staffing, coordinating, and taking public testimony on the new IRWMP. The policy process goes on in Sacramento and issues arise in the region that might be dealt with under the IRWMP were it complete. One issue of particular interest is the long-term implications of out-of-region water transfers.

One of the foundational objectives of the IRWMP is to "develop regional water transfer guidelines to facilitate efficient management of water supplies that recognize the NSV Region as having the first priority for use as feasible." We intend to pursue that objective as a matter of priority, but the pressure for out-of-region water transfers continues to rise, and transfers are contemplated for this year that could set precedents that would undermine a regional approach.

Consequently, the NSV IRWMP Board is calling on all irrigation districts within the boundaries of the six participating counties to voluntarily declare a moratorium on out-of-region water transfers until July 1, 2014. We are asking the Boards of Supervisors of the six counties to endorse this voluntary moratorium. With the cooperation and participation of all interested institutional and non-institutional stakeholders, we are committed to having regional water transfer guidelines completed by April 1, 2014.

We urge you to express your support of a voluntary moratorium through a Board resolution similar to the attached.

Sincerely,

Chair, Northern Sacramento Valley
IRWMP Board of Directors

SUGGESTED RESOLUTION

SUPPORTING A VOLUNTARY MORATORIUM ON OUT-OF-REGION WATER TRANSFERS

Whereas, the foundational concept of the California Water Plan is statewide integrated water management; and

Whereas, statewide integrated water management is based on a system of integrated regional water management suited to meet each region's needs for the long term; and

Whereas, the guiding principles of the California water Plan include promotion of regional coordination and collaboration among local governments and agencies, public and private organizations, and Tribal governments and Tribal communities; and

Whereas, the County of _____ shares the vision of the Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Plan of establishing a regional collaborative structure with the objective of ensuring an affordable, sustainable water supply that supports agricultural, business, environmental, recreational, and domestic needs of the Northern Sacramento Valley; and

Whereas, the Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Plan includes the objective of developing regional water transfer guidelines for out-of-region water transfers; and

Whereas, regional water transfer guidelines could provide uniform long-term protection of Northern Sacramento Valley water resources; and

Whereas, regional water transfer guidelines would not be mandatory; and

Whereas, current out-of-region water transfer proposals are not collaborative efforts that transparently include the broader interests of the greater Northern Sacramento Valley;

Now therefore be it resolved by the Board of Supervisors of the County of _____ to:

1. Support a voluntary moratorium on out-of-region water transfers until July 1, 2014;
2. Urge the governing board of the Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management organization to expeditiously consider and approve water transfer guidelines on a schedule that would allow release to local governments and agencies, public and private organizations, and Tribal governments and Tribal communities not later than April 1, 2014; and
3. Support inclusion of all interested institutional and non-institutional stakeholders in the transfer guidelines development process.