



Legislation Text

File #: 17-131, **Version:** 1

Report Prepared by: Mike Conway, Assistant to the City Manager

SUBJECT: Request to Approve a Letter to the State Water Resources Control Board Regarding the Draft Revised Substitute Environmental Document

REPORT IN BRIEF

Requests Approval to Send a Letter to the Chair of the State Water Resources Control Board Regarding the Draft Revised Substitute Environmental Document.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council - Adopt a motion supporting the letter sent to Felicia Marcus, chair of the State Water Resources Control Board asking for revisions in the Draft Revised Substitute Environmental Document.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve, as recommended by staff; or,
2. Approve, subject to other than recommended by staff (identify specific findings and/or conditions amended to be addressed in the motion); or,
3. Deny; or,
4. Refer to staff for reconsideration of specific items (specific items to be addressed in the motion); or,
5. Continue to a future meeting (date and time to be specified in the motion).

AUTHORITY

Charter of the City of Merced, Section 200.

CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

As provided for in the 2015-16 Adopted Budget

DISCUSSION

The State Water Resources Control Board is considering new rules regarding the regulation of flows on the Merced, Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers. This proposal would increase the unimpaired flows of the rivers by 40 percent, which would have a devastating effect on the region, severely impacting agriculture and altering local groundwater recharge.

The Board held several hearings on the subject, including one on December 19, 2016 in Merced. Council members testified at the Merced hearing regarding their concerns and opposition to the proposal. Staff traveled to Sacramento to present testimony in opposition to the proposal. The City

Manager and Economic Development Director sent letters in December opposed to the proposal.

Early this month staff received a request from Assemblyman Adam Gray's office for another letter in opposition to the Draft Revised Substitute Environmental Document. The request came too late to be included on the agenda for the March 6 City Council meeting, however the Assemblyman needed the letter before the March 20 meeting. In light of the City's previous opposition to the proposal, staff drafted a letter and it was signed by the Mayor. Staff is seeking formal Council support for the letter at this meeting.

Staff plans to bring before Council a complete Legislative Platform in the weeks ahead for its discussion and approval. Once a Legislative Platform is approved, staff will be able to respond quickly to requests for letters and to legislative actions, as needed, based on the contents of the adopted platform.

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

No appropriation of funds is needed.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Letter to Felicia Marcus, State Water Resources Control Board