



July 25, 2018

Dear MID Grower:

As you likely know, the State Water Resources Control Board recently released its latest version of its Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan Update, or SED.

In the strongest possible terms, Merced Irrigation District adamantly condemns the plan. In short, we believe it is a completely irresponsible water grab that would place undue harm on our already significantly disadvantaged communities in eastern Merced County.

In recent years, members of our community and MID have attended countless meetings and provided hundreds of comment letters to the State Water Board. With the release of their final document in July it is absolutely clear that the state is not willing or interested in listening to, or acting within, reason. The State Water Board intends to adopt its latest version of the Bay Delta SED toward the end of August. Additional information about the public hearings for this plan will be provided in a timely manner.

We have said for years that simply diverting senior water rights away from our community for the benefit of others does nothing to benefit the salmon that the state purports to want to protect through the Bay Delta SED.

As an alternative to the Bay Delta SED water grab, MID has continued to advocate its proposed alternative: The Merced River S.A.F.E. Plan (Salmon, Agriculture, Flows and Environment). The plan represents a comprehensive alternative aimed directly at supporting sustainable agriculture, fisheries and the environment.

The S.A.F.E. Plan would enhance environmental conditions on the Merced River while still providing protection and certainty to water supplies and water quality in eastern Merced County. Over the years, MID has spent tens of millions of dollars developing the most intense and in-depth scientific research on the Merced River that exists – research that has been inexplicably ignored by the State Water Board. MID has studied flows, temperatures, biological resources, habitats, and more. The S.A.F.E. Plan would put these decades of river science – and tens of millions of dollars – into immediate action.

The water the state intends to divert from our region and send to the Bay Delta would normally be stored in MID's Lake McClure for later use in eastern Merced County, environmental flows, and during times of drought.

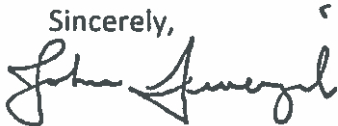
Lake McClure remains the most vital water source for the region. MID is not connected to the state or federal water projects like many other water agencies and communities in California – and does not have the ability to acquire supplemental water from other areas of the state. The State's desire to unnecessarily take surface water from the Merced area will have devastating impacts on the agricultural economy of Merced County. It will also further distress already over-drafted local groundwater supplies – used by cities for drinking water – and harm water quality.

MID had been engaged for years, with multiple parties including the state and environmental groups, seeking to find a compromise solution while protecting the District's water rights and eastern Merced County's main water supply. The District had no choice but to abandon negotiations when it became clear there was no compromise being seriously considered – only the hostile water grab from the community of Merced.

We have reached a critical point and new chapter in the fight to protect our region's water supply. Our community's input appears to have fallen on the deaf ears of bureaucrats in Sacramento. Everything – and anything – is on the table at this point to protect our community's senior water rights. As our community collectively works to fight back against the State's water grab, I invite you to remain informed and educated about important happenings.

MID will continue to mail you information about the Bay Delta SED. You can also watch for periodic updates of information on our website at [www.MercedID.org](http://www.MercedID.org). You can also sign up for important newsletters and electronic mailings on our website. Both MID and other leaders in our community stand willing and ready to fight to protect our community's water supply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Sweigard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

John Sweigard  
General Manager