



Central Region
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December 8, 2022

John Sweigard, General Manager
Phillip McMurray, General Counsel
Merced Irrigation District
744 W 20th Street
Merced, California 95340

Subject: Fish Passage at Crocker Huffman Dam - *Water Audit California v. Merced Irrigation District*, Merced County Superior Court Case No. 22cv-03034

Dear Messrs. Sweigard and McMurray:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is aware of the verified complaint and petition (complaint) *Water Audit California (WAC)* has filed against Merced Irrigation District (MID) in the above-referenced case. WAC seeks an order from the court requiring MID to reopen and maintain the fishway at the Crocker-Huffman diversion dam on the Merced River. CDFW is also aware that WAC and MID met on November 4, 2022, and during the meeting, William McKinnon, attorney for WAC, recommended that MID meet with CDFW and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to begin working on a process to restore fish passage at the dam.

CDFW agrees that fish passage needs to be restored at the dam. Indeed, in a letter to MID dated November 16, 2009,¹ CDFW explained that fish passage at Crocker-Huffman “must be restored.” To that end, CDFW directed MID to consult with CDFW to determine the adequacy of the existing fishway at the dam to pass fish and to develop a fish passage plan. To CDFW’s knowledge, MID did not respond to the letter and, as you know, the fishway remains closed. CDFW is willing to meet with MID, presumably with NMFS, to offer technical assistance to accomplish these goals with the understanding that restoring fish passage at the dam, whether by using the existing fishway or by some other means, remains MID’s responsibility.

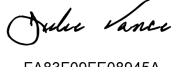
CDFW’s contact for this matter will be Gerald Hatler, Fisheries Program Manager for CDFW’s Central Region Office. Mr. Hatler can be reached at (559) 341-1814 or

¹ A copy of the letter is attached as Exhibit A to William McKinnon’s declaration in support of *Water Audit California’s* complaint and petition.

Merced Irrigation District
Fish Passage at Crocker Huffman Dam
December 8, 2022
Page 2

gerald.hatler@wildlife.ca.gov. CDFW respectfully requests a response to this letter within ten days of receipt.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:


FA83F09FE08945A...
Julie Vance
Regional Manager

ec: William McKinnon, Attorney
Water Audit California
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