



# DON PEDRO RECREATION AGENCY

*Sponsored By:*  
TURLOCK IRRIGATION DISTRICT  
MODESTO IRRIGATION DISTRICT  
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO



Headquarters at West Side of Dam

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Mailing Address: 31 BONDS FLAT ROAD • LA GRANGE, CALIFORNIA 95329 • PHONE (209) 852-2396  
[www.donpedrolake.com](http://www.donpedrolake.com)

November 18, 2011

Mr. Jim Kellogg, President  
California Fish and Game Commission  
P.O. Box 944209  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Dear Mr. Kellogg:

We have recently been made aware of a proposed fish stocking regulation that is scheduled for consideration at the December Fish and Game Commission meeting in San Diego. Upon reading the material associated with the proposal, we have concern about its impact on operations and visitation at Don Pedro Lake in Central California.

The Don Pedro Recreation Agency, a public agency sponsored by the Turlock Irrigation District, the Modesto Irrigation District and the City and County of San Francisco, operates and maintains the recreation area at Don Pedro Lake. As the sixth largest reservoir in California, the 2.03 million acre feet and 13,000 surface acres of water provides a significant recreation resource for its 400,000 annual visitors. The bulk of the visitation to the lake comes from California's Central Valley and the San Francisco Bay Area, and includes a large number of sport anglers.

The Recreation Agency sustains its operations and maintenance budget entirely through facility use fees. Part of the operations and annual budget is the planting of genetically confirmed Florida strain largemouth bass in the reservoir. Since the early 1980's, the annual purchase and stocking of the bass in the lake has helped to sustain and enhance this fishery. Upwards of 70 Department of Fish and Game (DFG) permitted fishing tournaments occur at the lake annually with the prized Florida strain largemouth bass occasionally weighing in over 18 lbs. Both the individual anglers and the organized tournaments that fish Don Pedro Lake contribute greatly to the Recreation Agency's facility use revenue and to the local economy.

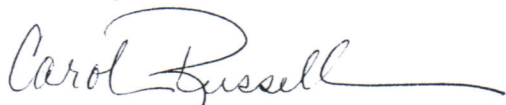
The Department of Fish and Game also plants trout raised at its hatcheries and Kokanee salmon. The Kokanee salmon are raised and planted by the DFG and funded with the help of the nonprofit organization Kokanee Power. Both of these fisheries attract anglers to the lake and contribute to the recreation area visitation and the local economy.

The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) required as a result of the proposed regulation will add a significant cost to the Recreation Agency budget at a time when the Agency has been working to minimize budget increases. Certain outcomes of such increased costs create concern as follows:

- The cost for the EIR will ultimately be passed along to the recreation area visitor. Additionally, the Agency anticipates that the cost for the bass that is planted in the lake will increase as the vendor passes along the expense it incurs to comply with proposed regulation. This will also be passed along to the recreation area user.
  - Some anglers will be discouraged from coming to the lake due to the increased fees.
  - Lower visitation will have a direct effect on the Recreation Area revenue and a ripple effect on the local economy.
- Since fish have been stocked in Don Pedro Lake for over 30 years, the impacts of such activity would have been realized years ago. We question the purpose for requiring an EIR with possible mitigation for an activity that has proven to provide a sustained recreational fishery over the course of the past 30 years.

While the concerns mentioned above specifically address the impact that the proposed regulation will have at Don Pedro Lake, the same impacts can easily be expanded to the State as a whole. As California's local agencies, private businesses, and recreation anglers navigate uncertain economic times, the potential for the cost of this regulation to outweigh the benefit seems eminent. We urge the Commission to keep this in mind as the issue is considered.

Sincerely,



Carol Russell  
Director

CC: F&G Commission Members: Mr. Richard Rogers, Vice President  
Mr. Michael Sutton, Member  
Mr. Daniel Richards, Member  
Mr. Jack Baylis, Member  
Mr. Casey Hashimoto, General Manager, Turlock Irrigation District  
Mr. Allen Short, General Manager, Modesto Irrigation District  
Mr. Dave Bolland, Senior Regulatory Advocate,  
Association of California Water Agencies