



**Surfrider Foundation**  
Ventura County Chapter – Matilija Coalition  
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(805) 667-2222 [www.matilija-coalition.org](http://www.matilija-coalition.org)



June 30, 2010

Jeff Pratt  
Director, Public Works Agency  
Ventura County Watershed Protection District  
800 S Victoria Avenue  
Ventura CA 93009

**RE: Follow up Response to Letters Regarding Proposal to Permanently Sequester Fine Sediments in Matilija Canyon**

Dear Mr. Pratt,

Thank you for your letter of June 21, 2010, responding to our concerns with the proposal to attempt to permanently sequester fine sediments upstream of Matilija Dam. Although there clearly remains divergence regarding the future disposition of sediment, we appreciate the opportunity to continue the collaborative process to move this project forward.

‘Ecosystem restoration’ for the Matilija Dam project involves restoring riverine functions within the riparian corridor such that future maintenance is not needed once the project is completed. Any project that results in permanent alteration of essential riverine features and ongoing maintenance in perpetuity is not effective ecosystem restoration, and perpetuates the taxpayer/ratepayer burden. In this respect, the Upstream Storage Area proposal is a significant departure from the consensus ‘Alternative 4b’ feasibility plan that is based upon *temporary* sediment stabilization within the reservoir area, and *temporary* storage of the fine sediments within the floodplain downstream. We have yet to see data that supports the claim that the consensus plan is infeasible. However, we are open to discussing other approaches - such as incremental notching of the dam in combination with slurring of sediments - that could achieve the long-term ecosystem restoration objectives of removing Matilija Dam.

Although we appreciate that the County did not intend to ignore the CEQA/NEPA ramifications of the proposed “Upstream Storage Area” concept, we disagree with the assertion that the likely environmental impacts of that approach would be minimal. Your letter does not specifically address the Environmental Defense Center’s detailed analysis of potential increased impacts and the need for additional environmental review – including, for example, that the Upstream Storage Area proposal would create several *permanent* threats and impacts that were not previously evaluated.

**Moving Forward with the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project**

We look forward to working with our diverse group of stakeholders to ensure that the removal of Matilija Dam is accomplished in the most cost effective manner, consistent with the principal project objectives that formed the basis for the consensus Alternative 4b:

- Improve Aquatic And Terrestrial Habitat Along Matilija Creek And Ventura River
- Restore Fish Passage to Benefit the Endangered Southern Steelhead
- Restore Natural Processes To Support Beach Sand Replenishment
- Enhance Public Outdoor Recreational Opportunities

In the spirit of continuing dialogue, the attached document provides an outline of potential solutions to the sediment management issues and brainstorming ideas for further discussion. We believe this project offers significant restoration opportunities beyond basic flood control objectives, and the opportunity remains to design and implement a project that will serve as an international showcase of ecosystem restoration. Achieving such a design will be instrumental in regaining stakeholder support and securing the necessary funding for the Matilija project.

Sincerely,



A. Paul Jenkin, M.S.

Coordinator, Matilija Coalition  
 Environmental Director, Surfrider Foundation, Ventura County Chapter  
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Attachment: ***Matilija Coalition Sediment Management and Restoration Opportunities.pdf***

cc: Senator Diane Feinstein  
 Senator Barbara Boxer  
 Congressman Elton Gallegly  
 Congresswoman Lois Capps  
 Supervisor Steve Bennett  
 Darrell Buxton, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
 Sheryl Carter, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
 Chris Delith, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 John Bridgwater, U.S. Forest Service  
 Chris Yates, National Marine Fisheries Service  
 Sam Schuchat, California Coastal Conservancy  
 Mary Larson, California Department of Fish and Game  
 Steve Wickstrum, Casitas Municipal Water District  
 Ms. Karen Kraus, Staff Attorney, Environmental Defense Center  
 Diane Noda, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 Anthony Spina, National Marine Fisheries Service  
 Peggy Hernandez, Los Padres District Supervisor, U.S. Forest Service  
 Vince Kinsch, Chair, Surfrider Foundation. Ventura Chapter  
 Janis McCormick, Environmental Coalition of Ventura County  
 Nica Knite, Southern California Regional Manager, California Trout  
 Steve Rothert, American Rivers  
 Steve Evans, Conservation Director, Friends of the River  
 Rick Ridgeway, Patagonia, Inc.  
 Linda Krop, Chief Counsel, Environmental Defense Center  
 Kira Redmond, Santa Barbara Channel Keeper