



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES
OF CALIFORNIA

April 9, 2020

Mr. Charlton H. Bonham
Director
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
1416 9th Street, 12th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Emergency Regulation Concerning Suspending, Delaying or Restricting Sport and Recreational Fishing

Dear Director Bonham:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to urgently request that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) move forward as soon as possible with its Emergency Regulation Concerning Suspending, Delaying or Restricting Sport and Recreational Fishing, by offering targeted, immediate postponement upon the request of specific local government personnel of sport fishing seasons set to begin during the current state of emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, along with any planned fish stocking related to the opening of those fishing seasons. RCRC is an association of thirty-seven rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from those member counties.

RCRC understands and respects that many counties across the state welcome the opening of fishing seasons as scheduled and feel that they can manage populations and the movement of people during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Sport fishing is an important part of our rural identity and outdoor activity is vital for maintaining mental health and physical wellness during this difficult time. However, for a number of rural California counties, controlling the movement of people – particularly urban/suburban non-residents drawn to rural recreation locales - is already making it nearly impossible to control the spread of the Coronavirus into communities which lack the capacity to provide healthcare to their residents who may become infected.

RCRC is gravely concerned that summarily opening sport fishing seasons statewide during this time of emergency will profoundly exacerbate these problems for several of our member counties. We support the requests by Mono, Inyo, Sierra and Alpine Counties for relief that have already been registered with the Department and

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ask that they be honored as soon as possible. We also strongly support the initiation through the emergency rulemaking of a system to allow you, as the Director, the discretion to fully postpone sport fishing seasons and related fish stocking activities in a county upon request of all/either the Board of Supervisors, Sheriff, or Public Health Officer until the county can fully work through this pandemic.

We appreciate your immediate response and attention to this urgent request to help ensure the public health and safety of rural county residents. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this request further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Staci Heaton", written in a cursive style.

STACI HEATON
Senior Regulatory Affairs Advocate

cc: Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency
Members of the California Fish and Game Commission
Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director, California Fish and Game
Commission
Members of the Alpine County Board of Supervisors
Members of the Inyo County Board of Supervisors
Members of the Mono County Board of Supervisors
Members of the Sierra County Board of Supervisors