



North Fork Mono Tribe

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Governor Gavin Newsom
Capitol, State of California

Re: Gov's Water Portfolio

Dear Honorable Newsom

I am Ron Goode, the Tribal Chairman of the North Fork Mono Tribe. We are a State Recognized Tribe, with 15 Public Domain Allotments including a Rancheria (North Fork Rancheria) and a Homeland of 1.4 million acres covering the north portion of the Sierra National Forest, a portion of Yosemite National Park and Devil's Postpile National Monument. Our Homeland includes all of Eastern Madera County, a bit of Mariposa, Inyo and Fresno Counties. All of the Upper San Joaquin River runs through our Homeland.

I started participating in your Water Portfolio meetings with the Department of Natural Resources. My tribe was the only tribe invited, (CA Tribes have met separately in September), I invited the Dunlap Band of Mono Indians to join me. We gave our input at the meeting in Sacramento. However, it was primarily a meeting to organize. There were no Feds invited, no upper watershed folks, except us. Those in attendance, were urbanites, environmentalist, politicians, farmers, water purveyors, basically all water abusers, all talking about how to protect "their" water.

True, everyone has the right to water. Where we are now, the "state of water" and the "future of water" has been in the hands of abusers and down stream users. You have since received the final version of the Natural Resources Water Portfolio Process. Simply put, their request was how to get water users to the level of being able to "sell and trade" their excess water, via their water rights.

I'm participating in a new Progressive Water Forum of the San Joaquin Valley. Our motto is:

"Water is Not for Sale; Our water is a resource, not a commodity. Anyone that receives water can not sell the water to anyone. They can use it or return it, unpolluted, to the natural watershed but they can not transfer it to anyone else for a profit."

I've been working with DWR since 2008. We have implemented three Tribal/Agencies, Tribal Water Summits in 2009, 2013 and 2018, with some three hundred attendees over the two day Summits. These were true Summits because Tribal Chairs and Tribal Council Members were represented, and State and Federal

Department Heads were present. In 2018, thirty tribal leaders attended the Tribal Water Summit. We have made great progress. The Agua Caliente Tribe attended the 2013 Summit, using some of our verbiage in their historic lawsuit regarding ground water. The term CA Native American Tribes came from the first Summit and is being utilized in State Legislation as well as Federal Documents.

With that said, the folks in the Water Portfolio Natural Resources meeting were very adamantly opposed to the State of California Water Plan. Not saying I'm in-love with the Water Plan but my Tribe and I participated whole-heartedly in the last three Updates.

Reverting back to "Water Rights;" water-rights and water allocation for farmers has not changed since the 1980s. During that time our population in the major San Joaquin metropolitan areas such as Fresno and Clovis has doubled in size. The last Governor had cities conserving water – diminishing their use, up to 25%. This was good during the drought. Drought; a "funny" thing, we are "in" a thirty year drought as we speak. Only politics and politicians, and water users think the drought only lasts for 2 to 5 years, because in-between each drought since 1987 we have had El Niños, flooding, and an over abundance of water and snow pack:

1987 to 1992 – then an El Niño; 1993 – 97 then flooding; 2001 – 2003 then more rain; 2007 – 2008 then the Gov. extended the drought politically for one year (2009); 2012 to 2016, again, another Gov. extended the drought for political reasons (2017); abundance of precipitation and snow pack in 2016 and 2017; 2018 was technically a "drought" year, but we had an abundance of snow which saved the ranchers and farmers, filling coffers after they drained them; 2019 was a good winter and spring – meeting our precipitation and snow pack levels; there were no two years in a row to substantiate a drought; And now we are in the end of 2019 and in the new 2020 Rain Season, there is no rain in sight.

This State has endured mega droughts lasting 250 years and 180 years from 450 AD to 1650 AD; three mega Global Warmings during that 1000 year period; and from 1550 to 1850 each century had a ten to twenty year drought. For the Indigenous people who lived here in 1800, over 350,000 Indians lived on the land, not just surviving but thriving.

What does this mean? When our ranchers, farmers and water districts gamble with their water rights hoping their coffers will be refilled, this is not just a risk for them but for all of us. And again, as of right now our coffers (reservoirs) have all been drained.

Speaking of coffers or our storage facilities, the San Joaquin River has fourteen man-made dams on the River. I have formally and openly opposed Temperance Flat Dam. If the dam is built, three dams need to be decommissioned. Redinger Lake Dam is old and antiquated, Kerckhoff Reservoir serves little purpose and now PG&E is taking one of the two powerhouses off-line permanently downstream from Kerckhoff. Millerton Friant Dam has holes in the Dam. When the Lake is full the Dam leaks, most local folks express their nervousness over it.

On top of that, the salmon are barely returning to Friant, where they once traveled all the way up to Chawanakee Flats just below what is Mammoth Pool Reservoir. Added to that is the fact that our Rivers have to get to the Ocean to help cool it down – all this applies and contributes to what we are referring to as Climate Change. I was the lead author for the CA 4th Climate Change Assessment for the Tribal Communities in 2018. Our tribal communities have doubled and tripled the depth of their wells in the past twenty years. More and more water being drained by the Valley users, but as importantly, the land is not being cared for properly. Too much brush, too many trees, a lot of which are dying. When they die, they use less water but not being alive means they are not holding water.

When the land has fire on the land, and the land is being burned properly, new plants and new vegetation returns to the land, their root system holds the water and keeps the soil intact, and this renewed life draws up the water table.

Healthy trees reach down two meters (6 – 7 ft) for water, while native plants can only draw water from one meter. Therefore, with fresh vegetation, the water table is brought closer to the surface. This brings back the flowers, medicine plants, and food resources. When that happens the species count will increase from 20 - 30 to 150 - 170 different species back on the land. Water has to include the habitat, the wildlife, the native resources and the people.

It's not people first – its habitat and our relatives on the land first. When we run out of water the people and their commodities will be the first to go. If we don't think in terms of our grandchildren's grandchildren or seven generations ahead, and start making changes, seven generations or 120 years from now they won't even have what we have now.

The Water Commission will tell you that every County has the capacity to store thousands of acre-feet of water underground. Some Counties are storing ½ million to a million acres while others are in the hundreds. Madera has three aquifers which they started in the 90s, Fresno has numerous small ones. Some Counties are trying, yet areas like Tulare Lake Water Basin have a much larger capacity but can't get the decision makers to move forward. Time is of essence, another five year drought is lurking around the corner. I hope you learn a lot from the Portfolio Research.

Lastly, the North Fork Mono Tribe restores the land, meadows, watershed and cultural resources. We've been doing this since 1991 on county lands, State lands, Federal lands, Tribal lands and private lands. Most of what we do is with volunteers. Nothing wrong with using volunteers, but if it wasn't so hard to get grants we could do a lot more in a lot faster time. The one thing I keep saying to the funding Agency's is, to take some of that funding for grants (even 10%) and put it on projects and with folks who are working on restoration and proven implementation. A lot of funds are put into research, research that will take some five years to conduct, two to three years to write the report, two to three years for the relating agencies to discuss and implement the research, therefore ten years later the science is being applied. In that ten years of time a lot could and will happen or change on the landscape. This, versus putting the funding where it counts now. Both concepts are important, but we are in a large plane, running out of gas, circling the airport with no where to land.

Thanks for taking the time to listen to me. Thanks for being a progressive leader, it is what our State, our communities, our counties and our people need.

Hon. Ron W. Goode