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**CALIFORNIA COASTKEEPER ALLIANCE PETITIONS THE STATE WATER BOARD TO SET PERMANENT INSTREAM FLOW REGULATIONS FOR THE SHASTA WATERSHED**

**January 17, 2024 (Sacramento, CA)** – Today, California Coastkeeper Alliance submitted a petition to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) to establish permanent instream flow regulations in the Shasta Watershed. Instream flow regulations require a minimum level of flow in a watershed to ensure that ecologically, culturally, and economically important salmon have enough water to survive, recover, and thrive.

The Shasta River has historically been one of California’s most productive salmon habitats. During irrigation season, however, water is diverted out of the river and pumped from groundwater wells, dropping flows to extreme lows. In all but the wettest years, these low flows are far below what the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has determined necessary for these fish to survive, let alone recover from the brink of extinction. These poor conditions have devastated the salmon populations in this region, harming tribal cultures and contributing to the closing of the sport and commercial salmon fishing season in 2023, an industry valued at \$1.4 billion annually.

Due to the Governor’s emergency drought declaration, for the past several years the State Water Board has adopted emergency regulations to protect salmon and ensure that bare minimum survival flows in the Shasta Watershed. However, emergency regulations are reactive, contingent on an emergency declaration, and expire after a single year. Permanent regulations are needed to ensure long-term protections for salmon and to create predictable, proactive water management in the Shasta Watershed. It makes no sense for the Water Board to wait until an emergency to protect Shasta River salmon when these fish need protection every year.

“The State Water Board can no longer continue its reactive approach to managing water,” says Cody Phillips, Staff Attorney for California Coastkeeper Alliance. “Permanent instream flow standards are necessary to ensure that California’s salmon, and the people and economies that rely on them, are protected.”

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**ABOUT CALIFORNIA COASTKEEPER ALLIANCE** - California Coastkeeper Alliance represents Waterkeepers programs statewide as they fight for drinkable, swimmable, fishable waters for all Californians. CCKA defends and expands California’s protective legislation and strengthens the function of our State Water Board. For more information, visit [www.cacoastkeeper.org](http://www.cacoastkeeper.org) or [@CA\\_Waterkeepers](https://www.instagram.com/CA_Waterkeepers) on social media.