



**For Immediate Release**

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**RALLY FOR THE RIVER!** A DIVERSE COALITION WILL PROTEST SFPUC WATER POLICIES THAT HARM THE ENVIRONMENT, FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES, TRIBES, COMMERCIAL FISHING COMMUNITIES AND RATEPAYERS.

*Tuolumne River Trust, Save California Salmon, Restore the Delta, Golden State Salmon Association, Sierra Club California, Delta Tribal Environmental Coalition, San Francisco Baykeeper, San Francisco League of Conservation Voters, and Great Old Broads for Wilderness lead the way.*

San Francisco, California—This Earth Week, a powerful and diverse coalition will descend on San Francisco City Hall prior to a scheduled San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) meeting to demand action for the environment and communities adversely impacted by misguided SFPUC water policies. Following the protest, participants will attend the SFPUC meeting and demand accountability to impacted communities, the environment, and ratepayers.

Peter Drekmeier, Tuolumne River Trust Policy Director, recently stated: “By inflating water demand projections and planning for a mega-drought that might occur once in 25,000 years, the SFPUC has created a false narrative that leads to hoarding water and starving the Tuolumne River. As a result, the Tuolumne salmon population is worse off than on any other Central Valley river, and water rates are skyrocketing for Hetch Hetchy customers.”

“The way Delta water is managed at any point in the watershed will have an impact on communities and wildlife throughout the Delta ecosystem,” shares Cintia Cortez Policy Analyst for Restore the Delta and Delta Tribal Environmental Coalition Representative. She goes on to add, “unsustainable water diversions will impact drinking water reservoirs, impede recreation, threaten public health for disadvantaged communities, wipe away endemic fish species, and preclude tribes from traditional ceremonies and cultural practices. We must instead invest in urban water and wetland restoration projects that promote estuarine recovery and reduce the state's reliance on the Delta.”

Recent work by San Francisco Baykeeper has uncovered other pressing realities. “SFPUC is dumping raw sewage and trash directly into the Bay at a magnitude that’s almost incomprehensible,” says Baykeeper managing attorney Eric Buescher. “Sewage and stormwater pollution is, by volume, the single greatest source of pollution in the Bay, and SFPUC is likely the greatest source of that sewage pollution, which includes the pollution that causes fish-killing algae blooms.” San Francisco Baykeeper recently issued a notice of intent to take legal action against SFPUC for repeated violations of the Clean Water Act. Based on SFPUC data obtained through public records requests, the agency dumps in excess of 1.2 billion gallons of sewage and

stormwater into the Bay each year.

Skyrocketing water rates, low river flows, and pollution harm health, economies, and the environment; healthy salmon fisheries are at the convergence point of it all. “If the SFPUC’s goal is to suck the life out of the last ten percent of Tuolumne River’s surviving salmon population, then congratulations because they are making that a reality,” said Scott Artis, Executive Director of Golden State Salmon Association. “Unfortunately, their water diversion schemes are also harming the San Francisco Bay, the fishing industry, and tens of thousands of families and entire communities who rely on a healthy salmon fishery. Those very people will now find themselves out of work for a second year in a row now that the 2024 salmon fishing season has been closed due to disastrously low fish returns.”

Those quoted above are key speakers at Tuesday’s Rally for the River; they represent environmental justice communities in the Bay-Delta, Indigenous sovereignty initiatives, and critical conservation organizations. They will protest alongside partners from Save California Salmon, Sierra Club California, San Francisco League of Conservation Voters, and Great Old Broads for Wilderness.

The economic and ecological tipping point is now. At a time when taxpayer water rates are set to skyrocket for San Franciscans, the SFPUC budget is on the verge of collapse, and low flows along the Tuolumne River contribute to the erosion of health for all species, now is the time for the SFPUC to focus on sustaining human communities and ecological vitality.

The Rally for the River alliance stands united with sustainable alternate solutions. Read our attached backgrounder to learn more about the science-backed sustainability of higher river flows.

## **RALLY FOR THE RIVER**

an event of SF Climate Week  
April 23, 2024 from 12:00-1:00PM

San Francisco City Hall  
1 Doctor Carlton B Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA, 94102 United States

### **Speakers:**

**Peter Dreke**, Policy Director at Tuolumne River Trust

**Cintia Cortez**, Policy Analyst with Restore the Delta & Delta Tribal Environmental Coalition Representative

**Scott Artis**, Executive Director of Golden State Salmon Association

**Eric Buescher**, Managing Attorney at San Francisco Baykeeper

**And partners from:** Save California Salmon, Sierra Club California, San Francisco League of Conservation Voters, and Great Old Broads for Wilderness.

[Find more information about Rally for the River here.](#)

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**Tuolumne River Trust** protects and restores the Tuolumne River watershed for present and future generations. We do this through three key program areas: education, advocacy, and restoration. For over 40 years, we have continued this decades-long legacy of restoring and protecting this irreplaceable watershed that spans from the Sierra Nevada Mountains through the Central Valley to the San Francisco Bay. Learn more at [tuolumne.org](http://tuolumne.org)

**Restore the Delta** works in the areas of public education, program and policy development, and outreach so that all Californians recognize the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta as part of California’s natural heritage, deserving of restoration. We seek water quality protections for all communities, particularly environmental justice communities and California tribes, as well as community protections from flood and drought impacts. Learn more at [restorethedelta.org](http://restorethedelta.org)

**Delta Tribal Environmental Coalition** is an alliance of environmental allies and policy stewards protecting the Delta.

**San Francisco Baykeeper** defends the health of San Francisco Bay, its watershed, and Bay Area residents. We hold polluters accountable. Learn more at [baykeeper.org](http://baykeeper.org)

**Golden State Salmon Association** restores California salmon for their economic, recreational, commercial, environmental, cultural and health values by working closely and regularly with state and federal elected and unelected policy makers at water agencies to enhance salmon hydrology (flows of fresh, cold water), habitat and

hatcheries. Learn more at [goldenstatesalmon.org](http://goldenstatesalmon.org)

**Save California Salmon** is dedicated to policy change and community advocacy for Northern California's salmon and fish dependent people. We support the fisheries and water protection work of the local communities, and advocate effective policy change for clean water, restored fisheries and vibrant communities. We aim to help to support Tribes and the general public in engaging with public comments related to water pollution, fisheries, and beneficial use issues. Learn more at [californiasalmon.org](http://californiasalmon.org)

**Sierra Club California** explores, enjoys, and protects the wild places of the earth; practices and promotes the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; and educates and enlists humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives. Learn more at [sierraclub.org/california](http://sierraclub.org/california)

**San Francisco League of Conservation Voters** promotes environmental protection through active participation in the San Francisco political system and enhances the integrity of that political system for all San Franciscans. Learn more at [sflcv.org](http://sflcv.org)

**Great Old Broads for Wilderness** is a women-led national grassroots organization that engages and inspires activism to preserve and protect wilderness and wild lands. Learn more at [greatoldbroads.org](http://greatoldbroads.org)

**SF Climate Week** is a decentralized climate gathering organized by and for the community. We facilitate a week full of diverse, multidisciplinary events where organizers and supporters can connect, exchange ideas, and foster climate solutions. Learn more at [sfclimateweek.org](http://sfclimateweek.org)