

		to Government Code \$\\\ 11:41AM
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6 7	Attorneys for Cross-Defendant CASITAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT a special district	California
8	SUPERIOR COURT OF TH	IE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
9	FOR THE COUNTY OF I	LOS ANGELES, DISTRICT
10	SANTA BARBARA CHANNELKEEPER, a California non-profit corporation,	Case No. 19STCP01176
11	Petitioner,	Judge: Hon. William F. Highberger Dept: 10
12	vs.	CASITAS MUNICIPAL WATER
13	STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL	DISTRICT'S REPLY TO CHANNELKEEPER'S RESPONSE TO
14	BOARD, a California State Agency;	CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA'S
15	CITY OF SAN BUENA VENTURA, a California municipal corporation, incorrectly named as CITY OF BUENA VENTURA,	MOTION FOR INTERIM ORDER PENDING A PHYSICAL SOLUTION [Filed concurrently with Declaration of Casitas]
16	·	Fisheries Biologist Scott Lewis]
17	Respondents.	Date Action Filed: September 19, 2014
18	CITY OF SAN BUENA VENTURA, a	Trial Date: Not Set
19	California municipal corporation,	Date: January 14, 2025
20	Cross-Complainant,	Time: 9:00 am
	VS.	Dept: 10
2122	DUNCAN ABBOTT, et al.,	
	Cross-Defendant.	
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1	Cross-Defendant Casitas Municipal Water District ("Casitas") respectfully submits this	
2	reply to non-party ¹ Santa Barbara Channelkeeper's ("SBCK") Response to the City of Ventura's	
3	Motion for the Court to approve a Stipulated Interim Order Pending a Physical Solution ²	
4	("Motion").	
5	I. <u>REPLY</u>	
6	Casitas Municipal Water District ("Casitas"), a Stipulating Party and regional water	
7	supplier for most of the Ventura River Watershed ("VRW"), writes separately to respond to what	
8	it contends are legally unsupported and improper assertions made by non-party SBCK in its	
9	"Response" filed December 30, 2024.	
10	A. SBCK's Demand that the Court Order the Inclusion of a Non-Party In a	
11	Voluntary Mediation Is Legally Meritless And Unprecedented	
12	The City of Ventura ("Ventura") does a good job of summarizing the problems with	
13	SBCK's Response, and Casitas agrees with Ventura that because no party has objected to the	
14	Court's approval of the Interim Order, there is no basis for denying Ventura's Motion. That	
15	stated, the demands non-party SBCK makes in its Response, even if not technically an	
16	"Opposition," are improper (as explained below) and should be disregarded by the Court.	
17	Casitas is concerned that SBCK remains on the sidelines as a non-party, arguably not	
18	subject to the orders of this Court in the Cross-Complaint, while nevertheless making	
19	unreasonable demands of the Court and the Stipulating Parties. SBCK does so with regard to the	
20	ongoing mediation and efforts to develop a permanent physical solution, a permanent physical	
21	solution that has the potential to resolve the Cross Complaint while balancing the demands on the	
22	waters of the VRW from consumptive and non-consumptive uses alike. SBCK is well aware of	
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24	SBCK is not a party to the Cross Complaint in this matter, and SBCK has made no effort to intervene. As correctly noted by the City of Ventura in its Reply, which Casitas joins, SBCK is	
25	limited in the Cross Complaint to commenting on any draft physical solution submitted by one or more parties to the Court for approval. No physical solution has yet been submitted to the Court	
26	for approval. The Interim Order does not approve a permanent physical solution. It simply seeks to put in place interim measures to protect the watershed while the parties continue to develop and	
27	finalize a permanent physical solution that can be submitted to the Court at a future date.	
28	Ventura's Motion to approve an Interim Order (hereinafter "Interim Order") was stipulated to by certain Watershed Parties that are currently in mediation, and the State of California ("State") who are collectively referenced herein as the "Stipulating Parties."	
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Casitas' (and other parties) expressed concerns about SBCK's half in, half out, continued
participation in this case notwithstanding SBCK's non-party status and prior settlement with
Ventura that significantly limits its authorized participation in the Cross-Complaint. Despite this
ongoing legal deficiency—making demands of the Court while simultaneously placing itself
outside of the Court's reach in the Cross Complaint—SBCK goes even further in its Response,
demanding the Court take the unprecedented step of dictating how private parties conduct a
private mediation during the pendency of the Interim Order. Specifically, SBCK seeks an order
requiring the Stipulating Parties to authorize SBCK to attend every scheduled mediation session
(which are funded by the Mediating Parties), thereby eliminating the voluntary nature of the
mediation the Stipulating Parties are currently funding and potentially delaying or preventing
settlement through the forced participation in private negotiations that SBCK seeks.
Casitas is aware of no legal authority that would allow the Court to accept SBCK's
demand, and indeed doing so would appear to conflict with the very purpose of private
mediation—voluntary negotiations between parties to an ongoing dispute via the use of a third
party neutral. (See Jeld-Wen, Inc. v. Superior Court (2007) 146 Cal. App. 4th 536, 540-543
["The essence of mediation is its voluntariness and we reject the suggestion that trial courts
presiding over complex cases have the inherent authority to force a party to attend and pay for
mediation over the party's express objection."]; see also Cal. Prac. Guide Alt. Disp. Res. Ch. 3(I)-
A §3:14 ["The initial decision to attempt mediation and any subsequent decision to continue the
process is completely up to the participants. No one can be forced to take part, and a party can
withdraw if the party becomes dissatisfied at any point in the proceedings."].) Casitas is unaware

of any instance where a trial court has ordered parties to a private mediation to allow another party into on-demand mediated negotiation sessions over the objection of other parties. Making such an order, as requested by SBCK, would create the very same problem that troubled the Jeld-Wen court—parties forced, by court order, to mediate with other parties (or non-parties in this instance) against their will, arguably rendering the mediation process involuntary and depriving the current mediating parties of self-determination and the ability to resolve their own dispute out of court. (See Jeld-Wen, 146 Cal. App. 4th at p. 540 ["Essential to the mediation process is the concept that

1	the parties are in control of resolving their own disputeVoluntary participation and self-
2	determination are fundamental principles of mediation"]; Cal Rules of Court, Rule 3.853 ["A
3	mediator must conduct the mediation in a manner that supports the principles of voluntary
4	participation and self-determination by the parties. For this purpose a mediator must(r)espect
5	the right of each participant to decide the extent of his or her participation in the mediation."].)
6	Casitas objects to SBCK's demand as Casitas understands it is improper and will make it less
7	likely the mediating parties can develop a permanent physical solution for the Court to consider.
8	There is potentially a role for SBCK to play in the mediation process, ³ but SBCK cannot
9	dictate to the other mediating parties, via SBCK's request for court order in a "non-opposition",
10	what that role should be. Ventura in its Reply has suggested a reasonable approach to interface
11	with SBCK during the pendency of the Interim Order, a monthly meeting between Ventura and
12	SBCK (and other parties that may wish to join), that ensures SBCK has opportunity to stay abreas
13	of the progress of the mediation and also to raise any concerns SBCK may have with the
14	implementation of the Interim Order. Similarly, Mediator Ceppos has made himself available to
15	SBCK repeatedly.
16	SBCK's demand for "a requirement that Channelkeeper be included in the scheduled
17	mediation sessions" is improper, and objectionable, and it should be disregarded.
18	B. SBCK's Demand for Authority to Move to Prematurely End the Stay Is
19	Improper Since SBCK Is Not a Party to the Cross Complaint and Granting
20	this Authority Would Fall Outside of SBCK's Settlement with Ventura
21	As correctly noted by Ventura in its Reply, section 19 of the Interim Order provides that

As correctly noted by Ventura in its Reply, section 19 of the Interim Order provides that the Interim Order only binds parties who have stipulated to the Interim Order. It does not waive or otherwise modify the rights of non-signatories. Whatever rights non-party SBCK may have with regard to the Interim Order—and Casitas contends that those rights are, at most, limited to those rights granted SBCK in its settlement agreement with Ventura—those rights are not impacted or

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Indeed, given that SBCK retains the right to challenge any permanent physical solution ultimately submitted to the Court for approval (though not to challenge the entry of the Interim Order), it is in the interest of the mediating parties to engage with SBCK and seek, where feasible, to address concerns SBCK may have.

1	otherwise limited by the Interim Order because SBCK is not a stipulating party to the Interim
2	Order. Thus, SBCK's request that the court confirm "that any party, and not only the Stipulating
3	Parties, may move to lift the stay for good cause upon 14 days-notice" is improper, unnecessary,
4	and inconsistent with SBCK's contractually limited role ⁴ in the Cross Complaint.
5	C. SBCK Implies, Misleadingly, that No Flows Are Left in the VRW to Benefit
6	<u>Steelhead</u>
7	Throughout SBCK's recent efforts to insert itself into a case in which it is not a party, is a
8	persistent false narrative—that nobody in the VRW, other than SBCK, is doing anything to bring
9	about recovery of Steelhead. As but one example, at the top of page 5 of its Response, SBCK
10	makes the following misleading assertion:
11	"To the extent that after 2 years of negotiations the "Counter-Offer" fails to include
12	restrictions on pumping and diversions to improve instream flow in the Ventura River, meaningful
13	progress towards a mediated physical solution is impossible." ⁵
14	In addition to ignoring the flows that Ventura has agreed to bypass at Foster Park to benefit
15	Steelhead, this assertion omits the massive amount of water that Casitas annually bypasses at the
16	Robles Facility to benefit Steelhead. As detailed in Exhibit C to the Interim Order, Casitas
17	bypasses between 20 and 171 cfs at the Robles Diversion at all times—preventing Casitas from
18	diverting any water at the Robles Facility during drier years. This is a massive amount of water
19	that Casitas is annually prevented from diverting to Lake Casitas. (See Stipulation for Proposed
20	Interim Order, Exhibit C, at p.2.) Casitas has agreed to continue this extensive, meaningful and
21	expensive bypass at the Robles Facility during the pendency of the Interim Order. (See Interim
22	Order, ¶9.) SBCK's Response entirely ignores this reality—and the extensive efforts some of the
23	Watershed Parties are already taking to recover Steelhead in the VRW.
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26	4 As Oisi somestly shappyed in its Donly, Section 1.5 of SDCV's settlement agreement with
27	Ventura precludes SBCK from seeking additional interim relief pertaining to flows in the VRW.
28	⁵ Similarly, SBCK asserts in its Conclusion on page 5 of its Response: "The Stipulated Order commits the Moving Parties to little, and may provide a vehicle for continued delay (ten years and counting) in making difficult decisions by the Consumptive Users and the State."

D. <u>SBCK's Assertions Regarding Casitas' Commitment to Ensure .5 CFS in San</u> Antonio Creek Are Misleading and Not Based Upon Admissible Evidence

Casitas disagrees with SBCK's misleading assertion on page 4 of its Response, wherein SBCK states: "The proposed flow protocol for San Antonio Creek is less meaningful. Casitas proposes a minimum flow in San Antonio Creek of 0.5 cfs—a flow barely sufficient to wet the streambed, let alone to support Steelhead. And even this limited flow is contingent on "regulatory approval." This assertion is misleading for several reasons. First, not only is the assertion wrong, as demonstrated by the declaration of Casitas Fisheries' biologist Scott Lewis, enclosed herewith, SBCK submitted no evidence, at all, to support the assertion. The opinions of SBCK's attorney are not evidence. Second, SBCK ignores that Casitas cannot simply discharge water into San Antonio Creek ("SAC") without applicable regulatory approvals. Casitas cannot manufacture water from thin air. When it is not raining, "new" water has to come from somewhere other than SAC itself—either from groundwater or stored surface water, in order for Casitas to discharge it. (Lewis Decl. ¶5.) Discharging water from either groundwater wells or Lake Casitas to SAC, which Casitas has committed to do in the Interim Order, will likely require, among other approvals, a discharge permit (or waiver of same) from the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board ("Regional Board"). (See generally CA Water Code § 3260(a) [requiring persons discharging waste/pollutants that could affect water quality to file a report of waste discharge with Regional Board].) The requirement to obtain "regulatory approvals" in the Interim Order is simply an acknowledgement that Casitas must follow the law prior to discharging water into SAC. Third, SBCK appears to misunderstand the nature and purpose of the .5 CFS augmentation flows that Casitas has committed to maintain in SAC. Casitas has been monitoring and sampling SAC and other points within the VRW for Steelhead for decades. During this period, Casitas has observed that SAC naturally goes dry in stretches during extended dry periods. (Id. at \P 4-6.6) Mr. Lewis, an expert fisheries biologist with nineteen years of VRW Steelhead-specific research involving the design, implementation, analysis, and interpretation, has documented that Steelhead

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⁶ See also Declaration of Jordan Kear enclosed with the Reply of the City of Ojai (noting that SAC naturally goes drying during extended dry periods).

1	1 abundance was significantly reduced in SAC once fl	abundance was significantly reduced in SAC once flows in SAC dropped below approximately .5	
2	2 cfs, while refugia and successful summering in pools	s persisted when flows in SAC were measured	
3	3 at .5 cfs or above. (<i>Id.</i>) Thus, contrary to SBCK's u	nsupported assertions, the commitment by	
4	4 Casitas to augment SAC when flows fall below .5 C	FS in SAC is meaningful and a reasonable	
5	5 effort to benefit Steelhead supported by empirical da	ta.	
6	6 II. <u>CONCLUSION</u>	II. <u>CONCLUSION</u>	
7	7 For the foregoing reasons, and for the reason	For the foregoing reasons, and for the reasons articulated by Ventura and Ojai in their	
8	respective Replies, the Court should approve the Interim Order without the additional		
9	modifications demanded by non-party SBCK.		
10	10		
11	Dated: January 7, 2025 Res	pectfully submitted	
12		ΓAN & TUCKER, LLP EMY N. JUNGREIS	
13		UGLAS J. DENNINGTON	
14	By:	01.1.0	
15	•	Jeremy N. Jungreis Attorneys for Cross-Defendant	
16	16	CASITAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT a California special district	
17	17	District a cumoma special district	
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1	PROOF OF SERVICE	
2	Santa Barbara Channelkeeper v. State Water Resources Control Board, et al.	
3	and related cross-action Los Angeles County Superior Court Case No. 19STCP01176	
	STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF ORANGE	
5		
6 7	I am employed by the law office of Rutan & Tucker, LLP in the County of Orange, State of California. I am over the age of 18 and not a party to the within action. My business address is 18575 Jamboree Road, 9 th Floor, Irvine, California 92612. My electronic notification address is mmartinez@rutan.com.	
8		
9	CASITAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT'S REPLY TO CHANNELKEEPER'S	
10	RESPONSE TO CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA'S MOTION FOR INTERIM ORDER PENDING A PHYSICAL SOLUTION	
11	as stated below:	
12	(Via E-Service to File & ServeXpress) I affected electronic service by submitting an	
13 14	https://secure.fileandservexpress.com, which caused the document(s) to be sent by electronic	
15	Executed on January 7, 2025, at Irvine, California.	
16		
17	foregoing is true and correct.	
18	Marisol Martinez /s/ Marisol Martinez	
19	(Type or print name) (Signature)	
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	159/029518-0003 15559770.1 a01/07/25 PROOF OF SERVICE	



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6	Attorneys for Cross-Defendant	C 1'.C .
7	CASITAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT a special district	California
8	SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA	
9	FOR THE COUNTY OF L	LOS ANGELES, DISTRICT
10	SANTA BARBARA CHANNELKEEPER, a California non-profit corporation,	Case No. 19STCP01176
11	• •	Judge: Hon. William F. Highberger
12	Petitioner,	Dept: 10
13	VS.	DECLARATION OF SCOTT LEWIS IN SUPPORT OF CASITAS MUNICIPAL
14	STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD, a California State Agency;	WATER DISTRICT'S REPLY TO PETITIONER'S RESPONSE TO MOTION
15	CITY OF SAN BUENA VENTURA, a California municipal corporation, incorrectly	FOR INTERIM ORDER PENDING A PHYSICAL SOLUTION
16	named as CITY OF BUENA VENTURA,	Date Action Filed: September 19, 2014
17	Respondents.	Trial Date: Not Set
18	CITY OF SAN BUENA VENTURA, a California municipal corporation,	
19	Cross-Complainant,	
20	VS.	
21	DUNCAN ABBOTT, et al.,	
22		
23	Cross-Defendant.	
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I, Scott Lewis, declare:

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Rutan & Tucker, LLP attorneys at law

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1. I serve as the Fisheries Biologist for Cross Defendant Casitas Municipal Water District ("Casitas"), and I have been the Fisheries Program Manager for Casitas since 2006. I have a B.S. and M.S. in Fisheries Science from Oregon State University and I am currently a Ph.D. Candidate studying O. mykiss (also referenced herein as "steelhead" in their anadromous form), landscape, and adaptive (i.e., anadromous) genetics of steelhead and rainbow trout in the Ventura River Basin (anticipated completion Ph.D. in 2025). I have been working professionally in the field of fisheries for 30 years (36 years including seasonal technician work) covering many aspects of fisheries and aquatic research including: adult migration, adult spawning, egg incubation, fry emergence, juvenile rearing and migration, habitat use and assessment, water quality, fish passage, and hatchery operation and assessments.

- 2. Much of my work over the last nineteen years centers on conducting research and monitoring for endangered steelhead and their habitat in the Ventura River. This work includes determining the life history and population dynamics of steelhead in the Ventura River Watershed that include timing of adult entry into freshwater, migration rates, adult estimates, passage through a fish ladder and fish screen diversion facility, spawning location and timing, juvenile rearing habitats, relative smolt estimates, summering and refugia, and downstream passage timing and survival.
- 3. I make this declaration in support of Casitas Reply to the Santa Barbara Channelkeeper ("SBCK") Response to the City of San Buenaventura's Motion ("Motion") for Stipulated Interim Order pending court approval of a permanent physical solution. I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth in this declaration, and if called as a witness, could competently testify to all matters set forth herein.
- 4. Casitas has been monitoring and sampling San Antonio Creek (SAC) and other points within the VRW for Steelhead for the nineteen years that I've been with the District. During this period, Casitas has observed that SAC naturally goes dry in reaches during extended annual and interannual dry periods. During such dry periods, there is risk to Steelhead associated

1	with loss of summering pools and refugia that assist the fish in surviving in place until larger
2	storms during the rainy season. I have personally observed that the limited summering pools and
3	refugia in SAC can be reasonably maintained by flows of .5 CFS or less. For example, beginning
4	in 2011 before a period of extended drought, and extending to 2014 (when wetter annual
5	conditions resumed) snorkel counts for lower SAC were plotted by life history stages and
6	compared with mean weekly and monthly discharges. I observed that Steelhead life history
7	diversity was preserved through the over-summer critical period until flows fell below about 0.12
8	cfs to 0.20 cfs of the mean weekly and monthly discharge, respectively.
9	5. Upon obtaining required regulatory approvals associated with the discharge of
0	additional water into SAC, Casitas has the ability to maintain flows of .5 CFS in SAC from either
1	pumped groundwater or from stored surface water.
2	6. Based upon the data I have observed, it is my opinion there is potentially
3	significant benefit to steelhead in SAC from Casitas' commitment in the Interim Order to ensure
4	flows in SAC do not fall below .5 cubic feet per second (CFS) since maintaining .5 CFS in SAC
5	has historically facilitated suitable pool and refugia habitat for steelhead summering during
6	extended dry periods (which is when SAC flows can naturally fall below .5 CFS).
7	I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the
8	foregoing is true and correct.
9	Executed this 7 th day of January, 2025, at Oak View, California.
20	l da l
21	Scott Lewis
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19	(Type or print name) (Signature)	
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