



April 3, 2023

San Joaquin River Conservancy Board  
Attention: Board Chair Karbassi and members of the SJRC Board  
5469 East Olive Avenue  
Fresno, CA 93727

Re: Letter of Support for SJRC staff

Dear Board Chair Karbassi,

The San Joaquin River Western Reaches Access Activation Project (WRAAP) team respectfully submits this support letter pertaining to items B-1 and B-2 on the April 5th board agenda for review, discussion, and potential action item on public employee discipline/dismissal for the SJRC Executive Officer (John Shelton) and Associate Government Program Analyst (Rebecca Raus).

The Western Reaches project commenced in 2020 with a successful grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). From the start, John and Rebecca have been essential partners in helping define the project scope and process the grant application with WCB. Both, along with you Board Chair Karbassi, have effectively steered the project and served as critical partners for the past three years that the project has been active. The successful accomplishments to date are credited to everyone involved. John's knowledge of the Camp Pashayan site and several miles of river upstream have been invaluable.

Upon starting the project, one of the main objectives of the Western Reaches project was to set the path toward a #River4All, a community-driven initiative, through a robust community participatory planning process. The key guiding principle was modeling equity in outreach, planning, and design. John and Rebecca shared the vision and helped the WRAAP team to incorporate innovative outreach tools and strategies to make it easier for residents and young people to understand the planning process and to provide feedback. Camp Pashayan became the primary place for community events. Since it had been an abandoned site for a very long time, WRAAP and SJRC teams, along with the help from River Tree Volunteers, had to prepare the area for the meetings. Some of the events at Camp Pashayan received up to two hundred seventy participants. The overall WRAAP project has been very successful thanks to the support from John and Rebecca.



The WRAAP project team is glad to support the review process and is available to answer questions. We thank the Board for its continued support of the Western Reaches Access Activation Plan project to bring activation and equity to the San Joaquin River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Celedon".

Sandra Celedon  
*Fresno Building Healthy Communities*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheila Hakimipour".

Sheila Hakimipour  
*Urban Diversity Design*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Gibbs".

John Gibbs  
*WRT*