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Mr. Dan Ray  
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Dear Mr. Ray,

I am writing to point out an important error that was made during the review of proposals for Environmental Education funds through the Ecosystem Restoration grant program for 2002. The reviewers of proposal # 148, titled From Sierra to Cities: Sierra Watershed Education Program for Urban Users, made a factually incorrect assumption in their evaluation process. This incorrect assumption was listed in the review as a primary reason why the proposal received a poor rating. As the primary author of the proposal I wanted to point out the mistake and to argue that the proposal likely deserved a higher rating than it received. I am no longer an employee for the Sierra Nevada Alliance so I write primarily as someone who cares about California's aquatic ecosystems and who still serves in an advisory capacity to the Alliance.

The concept behind the proposed project was to inspire urban Californians to take actions to conserve and restore the watersheds that provide them with drinking water and electricity by educating them about those source watersheds. Specifically, the project would design a program to educate residents of Sacramento and San Francisco about the American and Tuolumne river watersheds.

The reviewers of the proposal apparently believed that the Sacramento River was the sole source of water for the city of Sacramento. The review stated: "The audience of this proposal seems mismatched because Sacramento residents acquire their water from the Sacramento River, not the Tuolumne and American Rivers." This is a major error. Data from the City of Sacramento Utilities Division indicates that between July 1999 and June 2000 67,549 acre-feet of water were diverted from the American River at the E.A. Fairbairn Water Treatment Plant for consumption in Sacramento. According to the Sacramento Area Water Forum Agreement the City of Sacramento diverted 50,000 AF from the American in 1995 and is projected to expand diversions significantly by 2030. The reviewers did not accept the statistics provided in the proposal but instead used their incorrect assumption as a key reason to rate the proposal poorly. The reviewers also ignored the fact that Sacramento residents are closely tied to the American River through hydroelectricity deliveries from the Sacramento Municipal Utilities District (SMUD) system in the South Fork American watershed.