

Office of Congressman John Garamendi

Letter for the Record

California State Assembly Water Parks and Wildlife Committee Oversight Hearing on Risks to California's Water and Wildlife from Proposed Reductions and Eliminations of Federal Funding

Tuesday, March 1, 2011

Dear Members of the California State Assembly Committee on Water, Parks and Wildlife:

As a member of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources, and former Deputy Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, I believe H.R. 1, the House Republican Continuing Resolution, would jeopardize the restoration of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, stop implementation of the San Joaquin River settlement, disrupt the Klamath River agreements and attempt to delay the Bureau of Reclamation's water efficiency efforts.

Developing California water policy requires sound science, careful planning and study, and reasoned debate.

However, H.R. 1 can have severe impacts on the California economy and harm the state's ability to determine its water future.

Section 1475, authored by Congressman Devin Nunes, of H.R. 1 defunds the critical biological opinions set forth in the 1986 Coordinate Operations Agreement, which are important elements of the plan to provide California with a balanced water strategy.

Section 1475 would disrupt the legal process and could once again force judicial action related to the Endangered Species Act and fish in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, halting statewide water distribution and imperiling thousands of California jobs, including in the agricultural and fishing industries dependent on reliable access to water.

Moreover, Section 1475 also disregards eighteen years of litigation that successfully brought an end to a longer conflict over water rights at the San Joaquin River. A settlement was reached that is agreed to by almost everyone, including local officials, fisherpersons, farmers, environmental leaders, and water districts.

Amendment #296, authored by Congressman Tom McClintock, to H.R. 1 would prohibit funds from being made available to implement the Klamath Dam Removal and Sedimentation Study. This would disrupt agreements among dozens of stakeholders to ensure salmon restoration and ensure water and power availability to farmers in the region.

Related, amendments #286 and #289 also written by Congressman McClintock would have defunded the ability of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to implement Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse Program and WaterSMART grant program. Both of these programs are essential to more efficiently using our limited water supplies in California and throughout the Western United States.

Ultimately, these reckless proposals would harm California. Jeopardizing the restoration of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, stopping implementation of the San Joaquin River settlement, disrupting the Klamath River agreements and attempting to delay the Bureau of Reclamation's water efficiency efforts is not in the interest of California and its people.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. Californians must be made aware of the drastic, disturbing, and far reaching consequences of H.R. 1 on our state's natural resources, economy and way of life.

Sincerely,

JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress