

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear President Obama and Governor Brown:

We are writing today to request you take immediate action to direct Federal and state regulatory agencies to revise environmental regulations and water quality standards in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to stop the loss of tens of thousands of acre-feet of water into the Pacific Ocean that otherwise could have been sent to drought-stricken communities in Central and Southern California.

It is our understanding that since February over 445,000 acre-feet of water from recent storm events in California have been lost to the Pacific Ocean as a result of the regulatory inflexibility of various Federal and state agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the California State Water Resources Control Board (the Board). 445,000 acre-feet of water is enough to meet the annual needs of almost 1,000,000 households or to irrigate nearly 200,000 acres of farmland. Given that communities in Central and Southern California are struggling to meet water needs and farmers are fallowing hundreds of thousands of acres of land that feed our state and country, loss of this water is absolutely unacceptable.

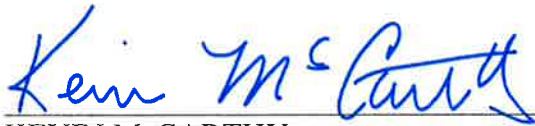
Federal and state regulatory agencies have compounded the current drought's adverse impact on the millions of Californians who live south of the delta by demanding disproportionate regulatory standards be met or allowing only the barest minimum of water to be pumped south from the delta to the remaining two-thirds of our state. For example, the Central Valley Project and State Water Project (the Projects) are currently operating under an order from the Board where water deliveries to Central and Southern California for human use are severely limited and can only occur after up to eight times as much water has been lost to the ocean for fish protection and other environmental purposes.

When water has been abundant, FWS and NMFS have limited the Projects' ability to pump water south because of delta environmental regulations, which, for example, resulted in State Water Project contractors receiving only 80% of the water they contracted and paid for when the California snowpack was 172% of average in 2011. Under current regulations, our constituents are being denied the water they deserve – during dry or wet years - as regulators continue to prioritize it for fish. This remains true this year even though a State of Emergency has been declared in California due to the drought and the U.S. Department of Agriculture has designated nearly every county in California as primary disaster areas.

Federal and state law and regulation generally recognize that disaster or emergency situations deserve special consideration. This includes items such as the Bureau of Reclamation initiating, and FWS and NMFS granting, an Endangered Species Act Section 7 emergency consultation to rebalance environmental regulations or the Board reviewing D-1641 and other water quality standards in the delta to ensure natural flow or any other water moving through the delta can be pumped south to meet the critical needs of families and communities.

California's rainy season typically ends by April. With just a few weeks of potential rainfall remaining, the urgency and magnitude of the California drought demands that Federal and state agencies be directed to abandon their inflexible approach of strict regulatory requirements and exercise emergency discretion available to them so we do not lose another 445,000 acre-feet of water into the Pacific Ocean when Mother Nature blesses California with additional rainfall this year.

Sincerely,



KEVIN McCARTHY
Member of Congress



DAVID VALADAO
Members of Congress



DEVIN NUNES
Member of Congress



KEN CALVERT
Members of Congress



JEFF DENHAM
Member of Congress




JOHN CAMPBELL
Members of Congress



ED ROYCE
Member of Congress



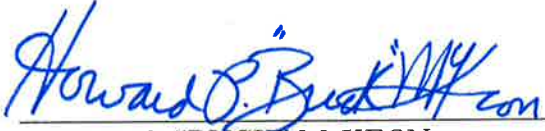
GARY MILLER
Members of Congress



DARRELL ISSA
Member of Congress



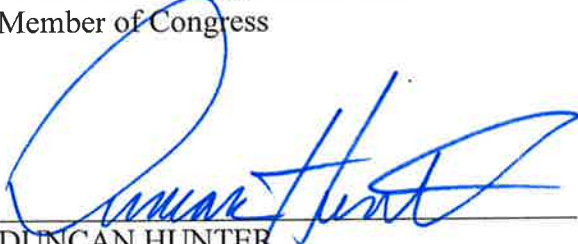
PAUL COOK
Member of Congress



HOWARD "BUCK" McKEON
Member of Congress



DANA ROHRABACHER
Members of Congress



DUNCAN HUNTER
Member of Congress