

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 27, 2013

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Jewell and Secretary Pritzker:

In light of the announcement of the historically lowest initial allocation for the State Water Project (SWP) contractors of 5 percent for water year 2014 and the potential for a 0 percent initial allocation for Central Valley Project (CVP) South of Delta (SOD) contractors, we are writing to urge that you continue to do everything you can to identify all available water supplies for our constituents facing an extremely difficult water year in the months ahead.

As you are aware, we have initiated countless meetings, phone calls, forums and other means to garner assistance from the Department of the Interior and the Department of Commerce. Your efforts would help to alleviate the effects of two years of dry conditions that have only compounded the impacts of the pumping restrictions caused by the implementation of the Endangered Species Act and the state water quality control requirements on water deliveries to South of Delta contractors.

These restrictions have resulted in levels of reservoir storage being well below their historic averages and have eliminated much of the flexibility of water managers to respond to additional supply constraints. Ongoing efforts of water managers across the state to enhance their available water supplies through innovative conservation techniques and new projects have delayed many of the most egregious impacts of the continued drought. Despite these efforts, a third dry year will have dramatic and catastrophic impacts to the population of California and the nation and will result in the loss of thousands of jobs, the fallowing of thousands of acres of prime agricultural farmland, rising local and national food costs, increased chances of major wildfires similar to the Rim Fire, and increased land subsidence as a result of continued depletion of groundwater basins.

The Bureau of Reclamation, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries (NOAA Fisheries) have engaged in a collaborative effort that has yielded some additional near-term water supplies, as detailed in the attached 2014 Central Valley Project Water Plan. These efforts are a step forward and we appreciate the work done by Reclamation Commissioner Mike Connor and Mid-Pacific Regional Director David Murillo to put it together. Yet this effort has, to date, failed to provide enough alternate supplies to offset the reductions due to the ongoing drought conditions, the reductions needed to meet the state water quality control requirements and the restrictive implementation of the court-remanded biological opinions on delta smelt and salmonids.

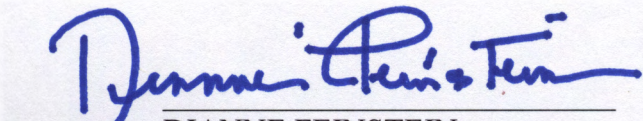
We would ask you to personally review the report and do all you can to identify all additional measures your departments can take to improve water supplies. Significant precipitation and the maximum discretion allowed under the biological opinions are vital to prevent severe adverse impacts to the people of the Central Valley and to California's economy.

As you know, there is significant policy discretion in how these biological opinions are implemented and it is imperative that every opportunity is taken to reduce the socioeconomic and environmental damage that is occurring. Maximum engagement at the highest levels will be required in order to improve the situation for water users in the Central Valley and Southern California and prevent impacts to California's population not seen since the 2009 and 2010 water years.

We know that there is substantial work ahead of us in addressing the long-term complexities of ensuring water supply reliability and restoring the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta, but nothing related to that long-term fix changes the reality that while the Bay Delta Conservation Plan is being implemented, an interim solution to our water supply challenges is necessary.

Thank you for your continued efforts to work with us on solving California's water challenges. We look forward to your timely response on the additional actions you will take to increase water supplies for our constituents.

Sincerely,



DIANNE FEINSTEIN



JIM COSTA