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**Subject:** Release -- CALIFORNIA CONGRESS MEMBERS' STATEMENTS ON CALIFORNIA WATER BILL PROPOSED TODAY



## United States House of Representatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **CALIFORNIA CONGRESS MEMBERS' STATEMENTS ON CALIFORNIA WATER BILL PROPOSED TODAY**

*Legislation would kill local jobs, gut environmental protections and do nothing to alleviate drought conditions*

**WASHINGTON D.C.** – Northern California Members of Congress released the following statements today in response to the California water legislation proposed by Speaker John Boehner (OH-8) and Reps. Devin Nunes (CA-22), David Valadao (CA-21) and Kevin McCarthy (CA-23). The legislation would allow water to be pumped south from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta for as long as water is available, or until summer 2015; it would undo portions of the San Joaquin River restoration, an agreement to reconnect the river with the Pacific Ocean and reintroduce salmon flows; and it would create a joint House-Senate Committee to find longer-term solutions to California's water challenges.

**Rep. Mike Thompson (CA-5):** "The current three-year drought is having serious impacts on farmers, families and businesses across California. We need to find science-based solutions to our state's long-term water challenges. However, this proposal is nothing more than a shallow attempt to use the state-wide drought as an excuse to steal water from the delta. It shows zero regard for the fishers, farmers, families and businesses who depend on the delta for their livelihoods, ignores a half-century of established science, guts environmental protections, harms drinking water and will cause enormous economic hardships across the delta region. The health of the Bay Delta is integral to California's economy. It supports thousands of jobs in farming, fishing and tourism. Pumping more water south of the delta not only puts these jobs at risk, but will do nothing to alleviate drought conditions. This proposal should be thrown out and solutions to California's water challenges

should be transparent, based on sound science, and developed with all stakeholders at the table so that those who depend on the delta to make a living aren't left high and dry."

**Rep. George Miller (CA-11):** "Clearly, we need to solve problems for the benefit of the entire state- and I look forward to working towards a solution with my colleagues in Congress to do just that. But this attempt to gut federal and state environmental and water protections without sound science or considering the economic toll on the Northern California economy does not help. Doing so is not only misguided- it's dangerous. The fact is, the Endangered Species Act does not control pumping operations in the Delta, and is not expected to significantly reduce water supplies this year. Rather, the lack of rain, low storage in reservoirs, and low river flows – not environmental laws – are the major causes of low water allocations across the State. Environmental protections in the Delta and our state's rivers not only protect delta smelt, salmon and other endangered fish species, but also tens of thousands of jobs in fishing, tourism, and farming in Northern California, while also ensuring drinking water quality for millions of Californians. Putting those interests at risk for the benefit of Central Valley agribusiness is not a sustainable compromise. Instead, by working together to conserve water and by making smart investments in conservation, recycling, and other innovative solutions, we can sustain our economy and environment even while facing an extreme drought."

**Rep. Jerry McNerney (CA-3):** "California is enduring a severe drought, which has negatively affected the families, farmers, and small business owners in the Delta region and throughout the state. This bill would allow south of the Delta water contractors and their allies who want to steal water from the Delta to do so, further exacerbating the problem. It ignores environmental protections, water quality issues, and the health of the Delta. This bill is not a solution to California's water challenges. To steal from one community to benefit is unacceptable."

**Rep. Doris Matsui (CA-6):** "There is no question that we need serious proposals to tackle California's long-term water woes. Unfortunately, the legislation unveiled today by Speaker Boehner and three other House Republicans is not the answer. This proposal is a water grab, plain and simple. Modeled after legislation that failed last Congress, it guts the Endangered Species Act, and would allow more water to be pumped from the Delta, regardless of whether or not the Delta has the water to spare. Sucking the Delta dry is not the answer to California's water issues. We need long-term solutions that will benefit the entire state, and should be working together to solve California's water problems through a balanced approach. This proposal is anything but balanced and will only create further discord."

**Rep. John Garamendi (CA-3):** "I'd like to welcome Speaker Boehner to California. The severity of the drought our state is facing certainly warrants it. I hope the Speaker will be interested in meeting the family farmers, fishermen, and recreational business owners whose livelihoods depend on a healthy Delta, and I will be happy to introduce him. If he'd like to learn more about smart investments we can make in water recycling, conservation, storage, and levee construction that create more water for the entire state, I'd love to [walk him through my comprehensive water plan for all California communities](#). I'd also like to caution the Speaker to not forget about the missteps of the Westlands Water District, particularly why it was a bad idea for farmers in that district, given their decades-long federal water contract, to plant permanent tree crops when dry years were inevitable."

**Rep. Ami Bera (CA-7):** "For the third year in a row, drought and dry conditions are hurting many families, small businesses, and farmers in Sacramento County and beyond. Folsom Lake is already at historically low levels, and pumping more water south, not only puts jobs and our local economy at risk, but also does nothing to address the underlying problem, and only further exacerbates our local water shortage. We need to find both real solutions to address this crisis in the short-term, and a comprehensive plan for securing water access and storage throughout the state. This proposal, however, is a misguided effort to use the state-wide drought as an excuse to take much-needed

water from one area of our state and send it to another.”

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