



July 17, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Room H-305, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Room H-305, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman and Ranking Members,

I am writing to express opposition to recent attempts by Congress to circumvent California's water management framework by adding riders to the Appropriations bill. Particularly concerning are efforts to preclude judicial review for the California WaterFix and other water operations, and to prohibit the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation from fulfilling its obligations to comply with the Bay-Delta Plan. The latter measure would upend California water rights and shift the Bureau's obligations to other water right holders.

California is committed to managing water and advancing water infrastructure projects in an environmentally sustainable, fiscally responsible and transparent way. Any proposal to exempt water projects from judicial review would violate due process and undermine public confidence.

Our ability to effectively and thoughtfully manage water requires balancing the needs of people, ecosystems, and the economy. Upsetting carefully negotiated agreements has the danger of weakening public confidence in projects advanced by the state. The additional pressures of climate change require that regulatory processes remain intact to secure both a resilient water supply and functioning ecosystems.

For these reasons, I urge you to pursue solutions that work collaboratively with the state's water management framework and that do not sidestep the rights of due process or existing federal and state regulatory structures. Any congressional attempt to weaken environmental priorities, undermine federal and state laws or circumvent judicial review is not in the best interest of Californians.

Sincerely,

John Laird
Secretary for California Natural Resources

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cc: The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Kamala Harris
Members of the California Congressional Delegation