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## **Dangerous legislation by Rep. Valadao uses drought as excuse to play politics with California's water management challenges**

Sacramento, CA- Restore the Delta (RTD) today blasted HR 3964 (Valadao) as “dangerous legislation being put forward by southern San Joaquin Valley congressmen using the drought as an excuse to play politics with California’s water management challenges.”

“This bill, by Representative David Valadao of Hanford, is being misrepresented as an ‘Emergency Water Delivery Act,’ ignoring the fact that *there is no water to deliver*. This is partly the result of the over pumping of the Delta last year by 800,000 acre-feet. That water should have been held for an extended dry period,” said Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla, RTD executive director. Like similar legislation (HR1837) that died in the Senate two years ago, HR 3964 would reduce water quality and water reliability for Delta communities and Delta farmers.

“The special interest agribusiness water districts behind the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) are the same proponents behind this disastrous Delta pumping bill. This reveals that their end goal has never been anything more than taking as much water as they wish from the Delta and Northern California rivers to support their unsustainable businesses.

“Governor Brown's statement that such Federal legislation would open wounds in the water waters and undo progress in planning is disingenuous. The State's allowance of over pumping in 2013 brought us to this precipice. And the BDCP, which will increase water export levels from the Delta, is nothing more than a greenwashed version of the same old idea -- moving as much water as possible from one part of the state to another when it's available, allowing the estuary to collapse during drought times.”

“During our present time of extreme drought, both our Federal and State political leaders should be focused on creating long-term local water projects that will actually make new water for the system, and serve California's long-term needs, instead rehashing the same old broken idea again and again,” said Barrigan-Parrilla.

According to Bill Jennings of the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, an expert on Delta water quality issues: "It seeks to ensure water flows to agribusiness in the western and southern San Joaquin Valley at the expense of smaller Delta family farmers."

If passed, HR 3964 would:

- Strip Endangered Species protections for iconic salmon and other endangered species, which are required under both California state law and federal law.
- Overturn the court approved San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act that, after twenty years of litigation, provided water for the San Joaquin River and salmon. All parties to the litigation and numerous water districts in the San Joaquin Valley supported the Settlement and the Act.
- Gut the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, which requires compliance with state law, encourages water conservation, makes modest reforms to reduce water subsidies, and contributes water for the recovery of endangered fish species.
- Override current protection for the Merced River under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and modify water contracts for certain contractors to provide significantly more water than they are entitled to under their current contracts.

Bill Jennings, Executive Director of the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, said, "The present crisis could have been avoided, and is a direct result of egregious mismanagement of the state's water supply system by the state and federal water projects. Excessive water exports and the failure to prepare for inevitable drought have created a decades-long disaster for fisheries, and placed the people and economic prosperity of northern California at grave risk. The State's obsession with tunneling under the Delta does nothing to address drought, or put us on a path to correct the misuse of limited water supplies."

"California needs to invest in local alternatives to the tunnels that improve water supplies in dry years. Groundwater cleanup, recycling, storage and other projects are far superior to the tunnels. Even investments in these programs in urban areas can free up water for farms and fisheries," said Barrigan-Parrilla.

*Restore the Delta is a 15,000-member grassroots organization committed to making the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta fishable, swimmable, drinkable, and farmable to benefit all of California. Restore the Delta works to improve water quality so that fisheries and farming can thrive together again in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. [www.restorethedelta.org](http://www.restorethedelta.org)*