

**Golden Gate Salmon Association  
Humboldt Fishermen's Marketing Association  
West Marine • Crab Boat Owners Association  
California Sportfishing Protection Alliance  
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations  
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association  
Fishermen's Association of Moss Landing  
Port Orford Ocean Resource Team • Water 4 Fish  
Fishermen's Marketing Association of Bodega Bay  
Ilwaco Charter Association • Monterey Fish Market  
Small Boat Commercial Salmon Fishermen's Association  
Golden Gate Fishermen's Association  
Hudson Fish Company • Coastside Fishing Club  
Port San Luis Commercial Fishermen's Association  
Pacific Rival Fisheries • Coast Marine & Industrial Supply  
Save The California Delta Alliance • Mission Peak Fly Anglers  
Institute for Fisheries Resources  
Northern California Council, International Federation of Fly Fishers  
Half Moon Bay Seafood Marketing Association  
And  
Individual Fishing Vessel Captains**

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid  
United States Senate  
522 Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
United States Senate  
313 Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

May 19, 2014

Dear Senators Feinstein, Boxer, Reid, and Merkley:

RE: Opposition to S. 2198

We are writing as members of the California and Oregon salmon fishing community to express our opposition to the current version of the Emergency Drought Relief Act of 2014 (S. 2198). As currently written this measure could decimate California's salmon industry and seriously harm Oregon's ocean salmon fishery.

As you know, Central Valley (Sacramento-San Joaquin Rivers and their tributaries) salmon constitute the second largest population of these fish in the lower 48 – only the Columbia River system is larger. Central Valley salmon – principally the fall-run chinook (king salmon) – are the backbone of our fishery accounting for approximately 90 percent of California's production and upwards of 60 percent of Oregon's ocean salmon catch. Our Central Valley salmon stocks support an industry that employs an estimated 23,000 workers in California and half that many in Oregon. Many of our coastal, and inland fishing communities, depend on salmon production to stay afloat.

We appreciate the stated goal of the bill - to expedite drought relief actions that are consistent with state and federal environmental laws and to bring people together to address this crisis. We agree that Californians should come together to help water-strapped cities, farming communities, and our natural environment during these very challenging times. However several provisions of S.2198 would seriously weaken the 2009 salmon biological opinion which has greatly helped not only listed winter and spring run chinook salmon stocks, but also the economically valuable fall run that our fishery depends on.

The 2009 biological opinion has greatly improved salmon stocks and delivered us from the extremely low population numbers created by conditions before the BiOp. Those low years caused the complete shutdown of the ocean salmon fishery in 2008 and 2009 – the first time in history - something we never want to experience again.

Our specific concerns include:

- **Section 103(b)(4)** would lock in a 1:1 ratio of inflow to exports, affecting the amount of the San Joaquin River's flow that can be diverted by massive pumps in April and May, when salmon and steelhead are migrating down the river to the ocean. In a critically dry year like this one, existing protections allow the pumps to divert all of the water flowing down the San Joaquin River (a 1:1 ratio of inflow to exports). However, the ratio increases to better protect migrating salmon from being pulled into the pumps as hydrology improves; for example, the ratio is 2:1 in a "dry" year as opposed to a "critically dry" year. As written, this high 1:1 export ratio – very harmful to all juvenile salmon attempting to escape the massive pull of the diversion pumps in April and May – could continue despite a significant increase in precipitation, either this year or in future years while the Governor's drought declaration is in effect. This concern is not hypothetical, as the last drought declaration, issued in 2008, was not lifted until 2011, long after the drought was over.

State and federal fisheries agencies have exercised significant discretion this year in implementing the BiOps, with regard to the requirements addressed in this legislation. In fact, we are concerned that they have been so responsive to the concerns of water users that they may

have significantly harmed the environment and the salmon fishery. Simply put, such provisions to increase water deliveries this year are moot and, in light of the actions of state and federal agencies, unnecessary.

Finally, we are very concerned that passage of S. 2198 could lead to additional rollbacks of environmental protections in negotiations with the sponsors of H.R. 3964 (Valadao (R-CA)). This radical House legislation would override state and federal environmental protections in the California Bay-Delta ecosystem and likely lead to the shutdown of our salmon fishery and California's San Joaquin River Restoration Program.

The drought was not caused by the limitations in the BiOps. Relaxing environmental protections will not eliminate the significant water shortages experienced by some farmers and cities. It could, however, result in lasting damage to our community. Rather than focusing on weakening environmental protections, we urge you to focus on pro-active solutions, such as the measures included in Congressman Huffman's H.R. 4239, Senator Boxer's draft drought bill and the State of California's drought funding legislation.

We look forward to working with you to respond to the impacts of the drought on California, including impacts on the environment, the salmon fishery and our communities. Thank you for your consideration of our coastal and inland communities that depend on the salmon fishery.

Sincerely

John McManus, Executive Director  
Golden Gate Salmon Association

Bill Jennings, Executive Director  
California Sportfishing Protection Alliance

Randy Repass, President  
West Marine

Larry Collins, President  
Crab Boat Owner's Association

Zeke Grader, Executive Director  
Pacific Coast Federation of  
Fishermen's Associations

Liz Hamilton, Executive Director  
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association

Leesa Cobb  
Port Orford Ocean Resource Team

Richard Pool, President  
Water 4 Fish

Aaron Newman, President  
Humboldt Fishermen's Association

Roger Thomas, President  
Golden Gate Fishermen's Association

Chuck Cappotto, President  
Fishermen's Marketing Association  
of Bodega Bay

Butch Smith, President  
Ilwaco Charter Association

Paul Johnson, President  
Monterey Fish Market

Kathleen Fosmark, President  
Fishermen's Association of Moss Landing

Marc Gorelnik, Chair  
Coastside Fishing Club

Mike and Yvette Hudson  
Hudson Fish Company

Chad Dahlberg, President  
Pacific Rival Fisheries

Pietro Parravano, President  
Institute for Fisheries Resources

Dr. C. Mark Rockwell  
Northern California Chapter  
International Federation of Fly Fishers

Aaron Longton, *F/V Goldeneye*

Barbara Emley, *F/V Autumn Gale*

Mark Davis, *F/V Billie Kaye*

Butch Powers, President  
Port San Luis Commercial Fishermen's Association

Frank Gee  
Small Boat Commercial Salmon Fishermen's Assn.

Steve Schramm, Chair  
Mission Peak Fly Anglers

Jan McCleery  
Save The California Delta Alliance

Benjamin Platt  
Half Moon Bay Seafood  
Marketing Association

David Bitts, *F/V Elmarue*

Duncan MacLean, *F/V Major Steppen Stone*

Al Ritter, *F/V Mickey*

cc: Pacific Fishery Management Council