



West
Delta
Chapter



July 5, 2011

The Honorable Tom McClintock
Chair, Subcommittee on Water and Power
House Natural Resources Committee
1522 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Grace Napolitano
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Water and Power
House Natural Resources Committee
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: OPPOSITION TO H.R. 1837 (Nunes)

Dear Chairman McClintock and Ranking Member Napolitano:

Restore the Delta, several members of the California Legislature, and other in-Delta interests signing-on to this letter are writing to express our strong opposition to H.R. 1837.

First and foremost, when the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation was created to provide irrigation water, the law (Reclamation Act of 1902) made it clear that the Bureau was to abide by State water laws. H.R. 1837 would subordinate State rights to manage water resources, thereby allowing the Federal Government to subjugate California water law to Federal political interference. H.R. 1837 is an attempt to prioritize junior water contracts held by a limited number of San Joaquin Valley growers over the senior and superior water rights of Delta farmers, and other farmers whose land falls within the Delta watershed.

Second, the 1994 Bay-Delta Accord has failed to protect the Bay-Delta environment. Earlier this year, recommendations were made by panels of scientists and fishery experts from State and Federal agencies, as well as non-government agencies, that call for greater flows to be restored to the Delta. Just at the point that we are beginning to recover salmon fisheries and address the real needs for water flows into the Delta, this legislative threat to increase pumping without proper fish screening could stall and undo real efforts for successful restoration of Delta fisheries presently and in the future. Moreover, returning to the record high water export levels of 2000 through 2006 would have a negative impact on water quality and quantity for a number of Delta farmers and in-Delta municipal water users.

Another problematic item in this legislation is the repeal of the San Joaquin River Settlement. The San Joaquin River settlement has the potential to restore water flows and water quality to the San Joaquin River, thereby having a positive impact on the water quality and quantity of the southern part of the Delta. The San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement is one part of the solution to improving Delta water quality and quantity for fisheries, farming and urban communities.

Attempts to reverse this promise for San Joaquin River restoration sends a bad message to Delta communities. Since the inception of the State Water Project and the Central Valley Water Project, promises made regarding the export of surplus flows and proper fish screening at export water facilities have been broken repeatedly. If Congress were to break yet another promise regarding restoration through legislative action, it would signal to Delta communities the Federal Government's sacrifice of the Delta for the benefit of another region in California.

It is this preference for San Joaquin Valley agriculture over Delta agriculture, fisheries and in-Delta urban uses that is the most disturbing aspect of HR 1837. Research conducted by Dr. Jeff Michael from the University of the Pacific has shown that decreases in water exports have had little effect on San Joaquin Valley job losses over the last few years, but that Delta agriculture does support over 36,000 jobs in California. HR 1837 is not a job creation bill for the San Joaquin Valley, but it very well could become a job killer bill for the Delta, and for California.

We recognize the need to help the San Joaquin Valley address its growing water needs. However, we cannot support legislation that has the real potential to destroy the economic and environmental health of our Delta communities.

In conclusion, we urge you to stop HR 1837 from moving forward in the legislative process and to keep it from being reconstituted in future legislative proposals.

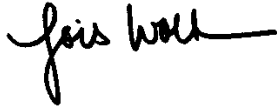
Sincerely yours,



Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla
Executive Director
Restore the Delta



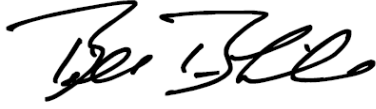
Ann Johnston
Mayor
City of Stockton



State Senator Lois Wolk
5th District



Assembly Member Joan Buchanan
15th District



Assemblyman Bill Berryhill
26th District



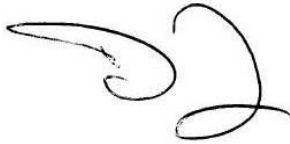
Assemblymember Alyson L. Huber
10th District



Larry Ruhstaller
Chairman
San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors



Mary Piepho
Supervisor
Contra Costa Board of Supervisors



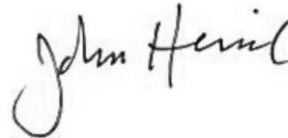
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Local Agencies of the North Delta
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Rosemary Atkinson, Founder
Campaign for Common Ground

Sylvia Kothe
Sylvia Kothe, Chair
Concerned Citizens Coalition of Stockton

Cc: Senator Barbara Boxer
Senator Dianne Feinstein
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