



UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 27, 2018

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

VICE CHAIR

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT,  
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION,  
HOUSING, AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY  
CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
Chairman  
House Natural Resources Committee  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop:

Thank you for your continued leadership in working with California's Central Valley delegation to address the persistent, and often preventable, water shortages that plague our region. As you are aware, securing a reliable supply of water continues to be one of the greatest challenges facing the Central Valley's economy.

In 2016, Congress passed S. 612, the *Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act*. This legislation aimed to allow for increased water deliveries to the Central Valley while expediting storage projects to provide the infrastructure necessary to capture and store water during rainy seasons for use in dry summer months. Although the *WIIN* Act has resulted in some flexibility to capture more water than in previous years, current Biological Opinions restrictions from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries (NMFS) limit our ability to divert water during periods of high flow and require large volumes of water to be released for Delta outflow.

As a result of unreasonable federal laws and regulations, many parts of the Central Valley have continuously experienced "man-made" droughts. Specifically, since October of 2017, California water users South of the Delta, known to be one of the world's most productive agricultural regions, have lost over 8,600,000 acre feet of water, costing the region an estimated \$1,000,000,000 in economic activity. In addition to producing fallow land, chronic water shortages further perpetuate economic and employment deficiencies in an area where unemployment is nearly double the national average. While I applaud the Bureau of Reclamation's recent decision to increase allocations to fifty percent for the agricultural water service contractors, it is incredibly disappointing given that current hydrologic conditions would have supported a much higher allocation of up to seventy percent.

I have heard from many of my constituents who are concerned that their livelihoods are being sacrificed because of scientifically questionable decisions made by federal bureaucrats working to protect the Delta smelt and several species of anadromous fish. The *WIIN* Act was intended to strike a reasonable balance between protecting our natural resources and ensuring a clean and reliable water supply. However, due to restrictions from USFWS and NMFS, today I find

ourselves trapped underneath a system that continually places the needs of fish ahead of some of America's hardest working farmers and families.

This deserves congressional attention. As such, I cordially invite you and the House Natural Resources Committee to see firsthand the real water loss impacts in my Congressional District, the epicenter of California's water crisis. I stand ready to work with you in any way possible to help facilitate this important visit and hope we can continue to work together to find common sense solutions to the region's water crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dell', with a stylized, cursive-like structure.

David G. Valadao