

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN DOC HASTINGS

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Committee Takes Bipartisan Vote to Pass Plan to End Man-Made California Drought, Create Jobs and Ensure Food Security

WASHINGTON D.C. – The House Natural Resources Committee today passed [H.R. 1837](#), legislation to prevent future California man-made droughts with a bipartisan vote of 27 to 17. This comprehensive solution will bring jobs and water supply certainty to the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys in California and decrease reliance on foreign food sources.

The Pelosi-led Congress did nothing for four years as onerous environmental regulations caused unemployment to reach 40% in some California communities and hundreds of thousands acres of fertile agriculture fields to go dry. With current precipitation levels near record lows, Republicans are not going to stand idly by. The plan that passed the Committee today protects 30,000 jobs and generates millions in federal revenue, while ensuring that both northern and central California receives a reliable water supply. The plan provides a balance of flows that will help people and fish.

“We are all aware of the human and economic tragedy that occurred in California’s Central Valley in 2009 and 2010 when hundreds of billions of gallons of water were diverted in the name of the Delta Smelt,” said Water and Power Subcommittee Chairman Tom McClintock. “This policy fallowed a quarter million acres of productive farmland threw thousands of hard-working families into unemployment and devastated communities throughout the region. H.R. 1837 was introduced in response to this man-made drought. The Water and Power Subcommittee held two public hearing on the measure and over the course of eight months more than 60 northern California water agencies were consulted and the result is an unprecedented consensus reflected in the legislation presented today. The sum total of this work broadens the measure to resolve long-standing disputes between Northern and Central California water users and brings the full force of federal law to protect the senior water rights held by Northern California areas of origin, and assures greater access to water by the communities throughout the region.”

“By passing this bill, Republicans are taking action to end the man-made drought caused by government regulations and environmental lawsuits,” said Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings. “My California colleagues have worked tirelessly to ensure future generations of Californians will not have to suffer through more misguided government regulations that threaten their livelihood and put the needs of fish before people.”

Background:

In 2009, federal regulations to protect a 3-inch fish - the Delta smelt - led to the deliberate diversion of over 300 billion gallons of water away from San Joaquin Valley farmers. This cost thousands of farm workers their jobs, inflicted up to 40 percent unemployment in certain communities, and fallowed hundreds of thousands of acres of fertile farmland.

The Pelosi-led Congress did nothing to reverse the plight of the San Joaquin Valley and reportedly obstructed Republican actions to reverse the situation. H.R. 1837, as amended, reflects Republican promises to avoid another man-made drought.

The bill:

- Restores water deliveries to communities by codifying the historic, bipartisan State/Federal agreement known as the “Bay-Delta Accord.”
- Reforms punitive federal laws, the Central Valley Project Improvement Act and the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act, in order to provide fairness to ratepayers, promote transparency and accountability, and save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.
- Allows water users to pay off federal debt early.
- Protects and secures private property and senior water rights.

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