

**Subcommittee on Water & Power  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives**

**February 4, 2010**

**H.R. 4225 (Rep. Jim Costa)**

**Written Statement of  
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Madam Chairwoman and members of the Committee, I am John McCamman, Director for California Department of Fish and Game (DFG). Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today regarding Congressman Jim Costa's H.R. 4225 which would provide much needed funding for drought assistance and improvements to California's fish and wildlife habitats. DFG supports H.R. 4225 and its goals for providing a reliable water supply while protecting the Bay-Delta ecosystem consistent with state legislation and policy. DFG would ask that it be a part of the planning process resulting from H.R. 4225 in order to help determine and prioritize funding.

According to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), the water years 2007- 2009 represent the 12th driest three-year period on record for our state. Although the recent storms have increased our water supply, it is not safe to say the drought is over. It will likely take more than one average or above average year to end this current drought. That is why H.R. 4225 is very timely in that it will help to mitigate many of the drought-related impacts currently facing California.

Since 2000 there has been a pelagic organisms decline (called the "POD") within the Delta, in which we saw a steep decline in the abundance of fishes and in the invertebrates and plankton that support them. There has also been a decline in Central Valley salmonid populations resulting in the closing of recreational and commercial fisheries for the last two years. The Department, through the Inter-agency Ecological Program, the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program, and in conjunction with the CALFED Science Program and our the federal fishery agencies has taken actions to better understand the causal relationships for the POD and implement ongoing habitat restoration projects and develop new restoration and management actions to benefit these declining species. These include the BREACH study to understand the benefits provided by the restoration of Liberty Island which has changed our thinking about what makes good habitat for these declining species in the Delta and will guide future restoration. We have also continued development of habitat restoration plans in Suisun Marsh and the Delta to improve productivity and provide habitat while continuing funding for salmon restoration (Battle Creek) and protection (fish screens) projects in the tributary watersheds.

DFG has a long-standing working relationship DWR, Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) in providing multiple uses for California's limited water resources while protecting our state's fish and wildlife populations. It is our belief that integrated regional water management and environmental stewardship go hand-in-hand. H.R. 4225 highlights and makes funds available for projects that support the co-equal goals of providing reliable water supplies and enhancement of Delta ecosystem protection.

Cooperative projects include funding mechanisms on a cost-share basis. In the early years of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, Federal Bay Delta Act Funds contributed \$124M to water-related restoration projects. During the last seven years the federal government, through the CVPIA Anadromous Fish Restoration Program, and Clean Water Act, Section 104(b)(3) has provided funding for environmental water, fish screens,

and other Central Valley restoration projects. DFG's state cost share, \$485M for these projects came from state bond funds. These expenditures are approved by California voters by passing bond initiatives for the protection of water quality and other water resources. Given California's current fiscal situation, bond funding is difficult to obtain and is often times simply are not available to match important ecosystem projects.

Short-term immediate water management includes real-time multi-agency decision-making is critical to accomplish water transfers, provide timely reservoir releases during critical fish periods, and provide water to state wildlife areas, federal refuges, and private managed wetlands. Additional funding to complete projects that facilitate these time sensitive fish and wildlife activities will help to ensure that providing necessary water for the most critical needs at a particular time.

Additionally, DFG and DWR have also been working closely with the Bureau and the USFWS to facilitate water transfers for the year 2010 and to develop a long term water transfers program. We believe that there is an opportunity to idle agricultural lands for water transfers and manage these lands in a way that will benefit wildlife species. Water management and wildlife management are not mutually exclusive activities. As a large landowner in the State, DFG appreciates the need for agricultural water. Agriculture is not only the backbone of California's economy, but provides valuable habitat for much of California's wildlife. DFG has several programs to assist farmers economically and educationally to develop wildlife friendly agricultural practices, conserve grasslands for wildlife compatible grazing, and protect riparian and wetland areas to protect water quality.

The recent comprehensive water reform package, passed by the California Legislature and signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in November 2009 goes a long way toward providing a long-term reliable water supply for California. The package establishes new Delta Governance and a Delta Plan, requires conservation for urban areas and development of Agricultural Water Management Plans, establishes new groundwater monitoring requirements, and increases penalties for illegal water diversion. Included in this package is an \$11.14 billion bond measure that is subject to voter approval.

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program, the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA), the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the Sacramento River Bank Protection Project, the State Water Project and the Central Valley Project have established a framework for joint State and federal funding of projects to improve water supply reliability, as well as protect salmon, steelhead, delta smelt, and other listed fish species and their habitats. For the past three years, these projects have proven particularly challenging in light of reduced fishery numbers during an extended drought.

DFG is collaborating with DWR and other state and federal agencies and stakeholders to develop the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). The plan will identify a set of water flow and habitat restoration actions to contribute to the recovery of endangered and sensitive species and their habitats in California's Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The

goal of the BDCP is to provide for both species/habitat protection and improved reliability of water supplies all of which meet the criteria H.R 4225.

I have included a comprehensive list of both short-term shovel ready and long-term state and federal projects with my written testimony. These are all projects that would benefit greatly from H.R. 4225 while benefiting both California's ecosystem and water supply.

Again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address your committee in support of Congressman Costa's H.R. 4225. I am happy to respond to any questions you may have.

## California Department of Fish & Game 'Shovel Ready' Projects

These projects have been designed, reviewed by scientific experts, acquired all necessary local, state and environmental permits, and currently await immediate funding for construction. In this category are:

Patterson Irrigation District Fish Screen Project: (\$16M, total, 50% State and Federal) to screen a 389cfs on the Sacramento River for agricultural and other purposes in the San Joaquin Valley.

Natomas Mutual Fish Screen Project: (\$46M total, 50% State and Federal) to screen consolidates diversions totaling 389cfs for urban and agricultural purposes just north of Sacramento.

Rock Slough Fish Screen Project: (\$9M, 25% State Match) to protect Delta fish species from diversion of water to the Contra Costa Water District for urban and other uses.

Yuba City Fish Screen Project: (\$5.3M, total cost) to protect salmonid and other fish species for water diverted (74 cfs) from the Feather River primarily for urban uses.

Tehama Canal Relocation Project: (\$62.5M, 25% State Match) to protect listed sturgeon and salmonid fish species by modifying and screening the diversion (2500 cfs) primarily for agricultural purposes in the Sacramento Valley.

Feather River Water Diversion Project: (\$1.5M) will screen diversion and protect migrating salmonid fish species from water diversions primarily for agricultural purposes in the Sacramento Valley.

RD 2035 Fish Screen Project: (\$18M, total, 50% State and Federal) will protect fish species in the northeast Delta by screening water diversions (400 cfs) for urban and agricultural purposes.

Meridian Farms Project Phase II: (\$20M, total, 50% State and Federal) will construct a screened diversion (30cfs) at New Grimes, in Sutter County.

## California Department of Fish & Game Projects on the Planning Horizon

These projects will provide long-term protection for fish species and increase water supply reliability, and will require funding two to three years out are:

Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project - Phase 2: (\$12M State) is a multi-phases project to restore and enhance 16 miles of important habitat for salmon species. The project will cost approximately \$47M and entail removal of several dams; water diversion removal, relocation and screening; hydroelectric plant improvements; increased flow releases; and fish ladder and tailrace improvements.

Pleasant Grove-Verona Fish Screen Project: (\$3M, total, 50% State and Federal) construction of a positive fish barrier on the Sacramento River at the Natomas Canal just north of Sacramento.

Natomas Mutual Project Phase II & III: (\$20M, total, 50% State and Federal) is a continuation of the project described above designed to consolidate and relocate diversions (250 cfs) to less sensitive areas for the protection of salmon and other sensitive fish species in the Sacramento River for urban and agricultural purposes including maintenance of conserved wetland habitats.

Bella Vista Water District Project (\$1.5M, total cost) identified as a priority action on Cow Creek, near Redding, consists of consolidation and screening of several diversion California for the protection of steelhead trout and other salmonid species.

Coleman Fish Hatchery Intake Project #2 & 3: (\$8M, 50% State and Federal) will modify and screen the intake at this salmon hatchery to allow flexible management of hatchery operations while protecting several races of list salmon species in Battle Creek, subject to significant restoration efforts noted above.

Bellota Weir Project: (\$11.5M, total, 50% State and Federal) will construct a new intake and fish screen structure to convey irrigation flows downstream to Mormon Slough, at the Calaveras River, an eastern tributary to the Delta.

Merced River Diversions Project: (\$800,000, total 50% State and Federal) proposes to screen several diversions on this eastern tributary to the San Joaquin River which is currently a federal and state river targeted for restoration for migratory salmonid spawning, and recruitment.

The State cost share for the above listed projects totals \$163.7 million. Funds for most of this State match are not currently identified or available. This could cause delays or failure of these projects to come to fruition.

In addition to the above projects, it is currently estimated that State cost share for the CVPIA 3406(d) refuge water program is approximately \$24 million. Funds for the State match have not been identified.