

ADDITIONAL VIEWS OF REPRESENTATIVE TOM  
McCLINTOCK

H.R. 4252 is a well-intentioned bill that attempts to force the Administration into making groundwater clean-up in the Rialto-Colton Basin in California a priority. Everyone acknowledges that the bill is a re-statement of current law and that new funding is not authorized, so I support the bill.

However, once again, we have a situation where one part of California is being helped on a bi-partisan basis while another part of California is being strangled because of partisan intransigence. I'm referring to the federal diversion of 200 billion gallons of water away from the San Joaquin Valley—where communities and farms are desperate—in order to dump that water into the Pacific Ocean to serve the Left's pet cause, the three-inch Delta Smelt.

To make matters worse, the bill before us today was re-drafted since it was heard in the Water and Power Subcommittee specifically to keep us from offering amendments that would address the agony of the Central Valley.

Time and again, the Democratic majority—using parliamentary gimmicks—has prevented any attempt to restore normal water deliveries to the San Joaquin Valley.

By the Obama Administration's own numbers, it has spent \$1.5 billion as part of the so-called "stimulus" in the Central Valley's six congressional districts to "save or create" 1,600 jobs. If you do the math, that's \$900,000 per job.

The Committee on Natural Resources had the ability at a recent markup of this bill to restore tens of thousands of jobs lost because of the water diversions at no cost to taxpayers. But, as usual, it studiously avoided exercising that power.

One of my colleagues in the majority cited an article from The Los Angeles Times that downplayed the economic losses associated with the massive water diversions from the San Joaquin Valley.

The article ignored the acute and unprecedented suffering that is occurring in the Valley. For example, according to University of California-Davis Professor Richard Howitt, over 21,000 jobs have been lost in the Valley due to the water cutbacks. Yet by submitting this article, the Democrat Majority seems to think that all is well in the San Joaquin Valley. That is far from the truth. Had they attended our recent Water Forum in Fresno, California, they would have quickly learned of the human toll that the pumping restrictions have caused.

But, perhaps Robert Silva and Amarpreet Dhaliwal, the Mayors of Mendota and San Joaquin, California, respectively said it best when it comes to data dismissing the man-made drought's impact on the San Joaquin Valley:

Reciting data does not adequately describe the hardship of unemployment caused by drought. Times are particu-

larly difficult for those on the bottom rung of the economic ladder—those who do not have the means to withstand a prolonged downturn. Talking to real people in our cities makes it clear there is much firsthand, eyewitness evidence of the hardship caused by man-made drought.

It is overwhelming for many people to see, much less endure, such conditions. Recent food handouts in Mendota and nearby Firebaugh drew lines more than a half-mile long. Dozens of people recently camped out or arrived in the middle of the night to line up for a handful of short-term jobs. People wait for hours outside grocery stores, not to buy food but to accept produce that's thrown out because it is too old to sell. Ironically, many lawns are overgrown with weeds because it is the only vegetation that can grow without water.

Now add to this misery “economic forecasts” that suggest the unemployment rate, which has put a stranglehold on our state, has somehow skipped farming. To suggest that our jobless residents are not impacted by the drought conditions is an outrageous, outright fallacy. What's more, these reports are harmful to the people suffering most—unemployed farmworkers. It takes nothing more than a look at employment data for the whole state compared with farm communities in and around Fresno to completely discredit this argument.

Recently, the Obama Administration crowed about how it would deliver water to the parched Valley, but once again left details to be determined.

I was extremely disappointed that on the same day we learned that the Northern Sierra snowpack is at 125% percent of normal, the Administration has only actually committed to releasing 5% percent of water deliveries owed to the Central Valley, with the remaining 25% contingent on future precipitation.

The Administration has acknowledged that in a similar weather year, the allocation would be as much as 20 percent higher, or enough water to grow food for 145,000 families for a year, if it were not for two biological opinions on smelt, salmon and killer whales that restrict delta water deliveries.

Republicans on the Water and Power Subcommittee will continue efforts to bring about relief to the tens of thousands of unemployed in California's Central Valley.

Farmers in the San Joaquin Valley are faced with making planting decisions now and despite near-record precipitation in the Northern Sierras there is still no water certainty. The people of the San Joaquin Valley need real solutions and a real debate in this chamber. The Majority party has done everything possible to avoid that debate and providing real relief.

TOM McCLINTOCK.