

Congress of the United States

April 15, 2020

The Honorable David L. Bernhardt
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt,

We urge your Department to work with the State of California to preserve the longstanding practice of coordinated operation of California's State Water Project and the federal Central Valley Project. The next few weeks are likely the last remaining opportunity to achieve that outcome.

Continued coordinated operation is threatened by the conflict between the federal biological opinions and the State's recently issued incidental take permit (ITP) for the long-term operation of the State Water Project. Given the seriousness of this challenge, we urge you to take advantage of what is likely the last opportunity to work with the state and seek a solution to this impasse.

We know you agree that coordinated operation of the state and federal water projects is necessary to ensure a reliable water supply for diverse uses throughout California, including urban, agricultural, and environmental uses. Together, these two projects provide water for an estimated 30 million Californians, nearly 4 million acres of the most productive agricultural land in the world, and many ecosystems—including managed wetlands—on which fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife rely. Historically, these projects have always been operated in a coordinated manner, with each project meeting its individual purpose while operating within a framework that enables both projects to jointly meet water supply and environmental obligations.

Numerous water users, both urban and rural, have made clear to us that all Californians stand to lose if the state and federal water projects are no longer operated in coordination. This will reduce water supply certainty and deliveries just as drought may be returning to California.

We believe this is a critical moment and look to your leadership and Governor Newsom's leadership to resolve this avoidable problem. Please let us know if there is any way we can help. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Josh Harder
Member of Congress



TJ Cox
Member of Congress