



## United States Senate

December 19, 2019

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor  
State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable David Bernhardt  
Secretary, Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

Dear Governor Newsom and Secretary Bernhardt,

I am deeply worried that we are on a disastrous course for California's water management that will harm both California's communities and its environment. To avoid this outcome, I urge California and the Department of the Interior to make every effort to develop consistent standards for coordinated operations of the Central Valley and State Water Projects in order to meet both parties' responsibilities under the federal and state Endangered Species Acts.

I urge you both to consider the long-term impacts of a protracted disagreement and lengthy litigation impeding progress on all fronts. The Department of the Interior and California are on a course to establish conflicting rules for the operation of the Central Valley and State Water Projects. This will create two severe problems:

1. It will become much more difficult to coordinate operations to optimize benefits to water users and the environment. Inconsistent regulatory standards and the lack of agreement on how to use shared facilities will frustrate opportunities to increase water supplies during major storm events when Delta pumping is unlikely to harm fish. Environmental interests will likewise lose out, with less ability to coordinate state and federal operations to achieve timed pulse flows or other outflows of sufficient magnitude to make a difference in benefitting endangered or threatened species.
2. With no agreed-upon regulatory baseline and with California and Interior fighting in court, it will become impossible to develop voluntary settlements of the State Water Board's Delta outflows plan. The voluntary settlements are critical to ensuring water supply reliability and

achieving the combination of habitat investments and increased flows necessary to restore salmon and other native species. The settlements will also allow for the implementation of essential environmental improvements now rather than having them held up by years of litigation.

There is only one way to avoid this potential crisis, and that is for the federal government and California to work together. I urge you both to come to a mutually beneficial agreement, and I stand ready to help in any way I can.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

DF:jw

cc: Wade Crowfoot, Secretary of California Natural Resources Agency  
Brenda Burman, Commissioner of Reclamation  
Karla Nemeth, Director of California Department of Water Resources  
Aurelia Skipwith, Director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Chuck Bonham, Director of California Department of Fish and Wildlife