



Delta Counties Coalition

Contra Costa County · Sacramento County · San Joaquin County · Solano County · Yolo County
"Working together on water and Delta issues"



March 4, 2021

Dear Members of the Delta Congressional Delegation:

We write to urge you to seek increased federal investment for desperately needed invasive species eradication activities as part of the upcoming fiscal year 2022 appropriations cycle.

As you know, non-native aquatic weeds and other invasive species pose an enormous environmental challenge to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. If allowed to persist, the nearly 200 different varieties of invasive plants and animals within Delta waterways will continue to threaten ecosystem restoration investments, agriculture, recreation, navigation, native species, and State and Federal water project operations.

We are appreciative of your efforts to include the Delta in the Harmful Algal Bloom Demonstration Program authorized by Section 128 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2020, and would urge that you now work to assure funding be made available for this program and specifically for the Delta.

The latest threat to the Delta is the proliferation of nutria. These large, semi-aquatic rodents are not only jeopardizing the state's nearly \$50 billion agricultural economy, they are a major public safety risk due to their destructive burrowing, which can damage levees and canals. Additionally, nutria continue to degrade and destroy wetland habitat throughout the Delta.

On October 30, the president signed into law PL 116-186 reauthorizing through fiscal year 2025 the *Nutria Eradication and Control Act*. While the original Act authorized federal assistance for nutria eradication efforts in just two states (MD and LA), PL 116-186 allows the state of California to receive grant funding from the U.S. Department of the Interior to implement measures designed to control nutria, as well as restore marshland, public and private wetlands, and agricultural lands damaged by the rodent. We strongly urge you to seek the maximum amount of funding for this newly expanded program beginning with the fiscal year 2022 spending cycle.

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With regard to invasive aquatic weeds, and despite ongoing control efforts, the total area invaded by non-native plants in the Delta doubled between 2004 and 2018. Invasive species such as submerged Brazilian waterweed, floating water hyacinth, and emergent giant reed continue to choke waterways and impede flow. Water hyacinth also can create a wick up into the atmosphere that transpires water about six times the level of evaporation from open water, according to preliminary research cited by the Delta Watermaster. The resulting degradation of water quality and quantity in Delta channels negatively impacts navigation, fish passage, flood management, irrigation and, at times, completely stifles the ability to divert water.

To help combat this growing problem, we urge you to seek increased funding for aquatic weed eradication activities under the purview of key federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NASA Ames Research Center and the Bureau of Reclamation. Congress must dedicate more federal investment for programs that focus on prevention, early detection and monitoring, containment, and eradication of invasive species in impacted waterways.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Wade Crowfoot
California Secretary for Natural Resources



Don Nottoli
Supervisor, Sacramento County



John Vasquez
Supervisor, Solano County



Karen Mitchoff
Supervisor, Contra Costa County



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