



Delta Counties Coalition

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"Working together on water and Delta issues"

February 24, 2020

The Honorable Jared Huffman, Chairman
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Comments on draft *FUTURE Drought Resiliency Act*

Dear Chairman Huffman:

The Delta Counties Coalition, representing five counties with a combined population of more than four million people, is pleased to comment on the draft *FUTURE Drought Resiliency Act*. We appreciate your leadership and long-term commitment to stewardship of the Delta, as well as the Subcommittee's focus on improving water supply reliability for all uses and users of water.

We deeply appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the measure and look forward to working with the Subcommittee as the proposal is refined. Overall, we endorse the draft's focus on efforts to improve our ecosystems while addressing safe and reliable water supplies for our region.

Among other benefits, the *FUTURE Drought Resiliency Act* would help advance non-federal investments in water reuse and ground and surface water storage projects, both of which are foundational to the long-term economic health of our region and State. We also support many of the provisions that seek to support the restoration of a healthy delta and promote the recovery of the Delta smelt and Sacramento River salmon runs.

As the legislation moves through the process, we encourage you to consider proposals to expand the environmental restoration and compliance portions of the *WIIN Act*, which would support critically important habitat improvement projects for Delta smelt, salmon, waterfowl and shorebirds. As restoration in the Delta proceeds, however, we do urge that restoration projects be carefully planned and that Good Neighbor policies be incorporated into projects to prevent adverse effects on neighboring lands and waterways.

We also encourage you to support the creation of a Reclamation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loan program, modeled after the Environmental Protection Agency's highly successful Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act program, which would

lower the cost of financing critically needed non-federal water projects by as much as 20 to 25 percent. We urge you to help ensure that the legislation keeps this important federal assistance focused on projects that have broad State and local support that offer strategic, affordable and unifying solutions to secure resilient, long-term water supplies while also preserving our precious natural resources for all generations.

Finally, we appreciate your recognition, reflected in the legislation, of the coequal goals established by the Delta Reform Act, of providing a more reliable water supply in California, and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem, and that these coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resources, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place. We share your understanding that the legislation be implemented in a manner ensuring that Federal programs, policies, and investments respect and complement, and do not undermine or conflict with, California's policy of reducing reliance on Delta diversions.

Thank you for your leadership on this important legislation and on California and western water issues. We look forward to continuing to work with you as this bill advances in the House.

Sincerely,



Don Nottoli
Supervisor, Sacramento County



Skip Thomson
Supervisor, Solano County



Karen Mitchoff
Supervisor, Contra Costa
County



Oscar Villegas
Supervisor, Yolo County



Chuck Winn
Supervisor, San Joaquin
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