



July 15, 2015

Speaker John Boehner
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
233 Cannon Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Rob Bishop
House Natural Resources Committee
123 Cannon Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Raul Grijalva
House Natural Resources Committee
1511 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear House Leaders,

The drought in California and the arid West has created an unprecedented situation which requires sacrifice and tough choices. H.R. 2898, the Western Water and American Food Security Act of 2015, however, would disproportionately place the brunt of the sacrifice on fishery resources, sport and commercial fishing industries, and communities in California, Oregon, and Washington.

The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) is the nation's recreational fishing trade association. In California alone, there are nearly 1.7 million anglers who have a \$4.6 billion annual economic impact, supporting 36,000 jobs. ASA has significant concerns with H.R. 2898. Specifically, we fear that if implemented various provisions in this bill will worsen an already difficult situation caused by drought. The livelihoods of thousands of commercial and recreational fishermen, fishing guides, tackle shops, and communities across California and along the West Coast depend on salmon fisheries. If not for an abundant salmon fishery and angler access to these iconic species, tourism would also surely suffer.

ASA is aware that, despite the many stakeholder groups, non-fishing interests have prevailed in previous instances of water allocation during drought. We are concerned that written protections for fisheries in the Sacramento-San Joaquin watershed are too frequently undermined, slighting the social, economic, and environmental benefits of conservation. The dry conditions that are causing low water supplies are placing a hardship on many and it is important that balanced solutions be sought. ASA is opposed to any legislation, such as H.R. 2898, that seeks to evade federal salmon protections. Overturning the provisions of the Endangered Species Act and decimating a major fishery sets a dangerous precedent and threatens natural resources nationwide.

California's iconic Chinook salmon have thrived in great abundance for millennia. Water projects in California already have slashed this abundance to a fraction of its former levels. California's salmon may vanish altogether if this legislation passes. Today, northern California Chinook and Coho salmon have access to just 10 percent of spawning areas that were occupied 100 years ago. As a

AMERICAN SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION

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result of their limited range and other environmental factors and governance, the salmon fishing industry is nowhere near its estimated worth of \$5 billion if restored.

This bill would weaken or eliminate protections for California's rivers, salmon fisheries and the Bay-Delta estuary. We urge the Congress to legislate more balanced measures, and therefore oppose H.R. 2898.

Sincerely,

Scott Gudes
Vice President of Government Affairs
American Sportfishing Association

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