

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

May 20, 1997

The Honorable Bruce Babbitt  
Secretary of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The signing of the landmark Bay/Delta Accord on December 15, 1994 signaled a new direction in decision-making on one of the most contentious subjects in California - water. Bringing together north and south, farm, city and environmental interests, and the Clinton and Wilson administrations, the Accord called an historic truce in the "water wars" and set the state upon a course of finding long-term solutions to conflicts over California's most valuable resource.

Your leadership was critical in bringing diverse interests to the table and the Accord is widely acknowledged as one of the Department of Interior's most important achievements of the first Clinton term. The consensus-based CALFED process is building on that success today by seeking long-term water supply reliability for farms and cities and broad ecosystem restoration for the Bay/Delta. We believe CALFED is vital to California's economic and environmental future, and we have great hopes for its success.

A critical underpinning to both the Bay/Delta Accord and the CALFED process is threatened today, however. Key provisions of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act of 1992 (CVPIA) have not been implemented as intended by Congress and are the subject of policy decisions that will soon be made by the Department. If those decisions fail to implement the law correctly, we are concerned the progress we have made and are continuing to make on solving water conflicts in California could be lost.

The CVPIA included a provision requiring efforts to double natural populations of salmon, steelhead, striped bass and other anadromous fish species. The Act in section 3406(b)(2) also requires the Secretary to "dedicate and manage annually eight hundred thousand acre feet of Central Valley Project yield for the primary purpose" of meeting this fish doubling goal.

Passed two years prior to the Accord's signing, the CVPIA was viewed at the time as a critical underpinning to the Accord, and to the CALFED process which grew out of the Accord.

Since 1992, however, the Department has not adequately utilized the "environmental water" provided under section 3406(b)(2). In 1996 and 1997, in particular, little of this water was used to help double salmon, steelhead, striped bass populations despite a detailed program to do so

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designed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which is given the lead in deciding uses of this water under the CVPIA.

Interior is currently considering long-term policy decisions which could make the failure to use the environmental water or "dedicated yield" a permanent condition. Should that occur, we are concerned that the goodwill created by the Accord and the historic opportunities available under the CALFED process could be lost.

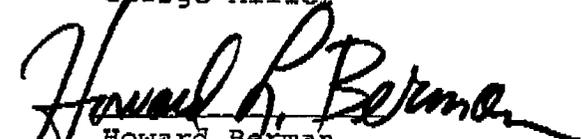
We believe the CVPIA should be implemented as Congress intended, and that the long-term rules governing the environmental water should make that water made available in every year it is needed to contribute to fish doubling goals. We further believe that claims by certain interests that the Bay/Delta Accord precluded the use of this water in the Delta are incorrect and irresponsible and should be rejected.

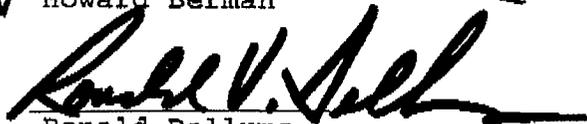
Finally, we believe it is essential for the Administration to maintain an atmosphere of utmost integrity and trust during delicate negotiations and analyses associated with the CALFED process. We are concerned that continued failure to implement the CVPIA as Congress intended will destroy that trust, with negative consequences for California's future ability to solve delicate resource issues through consensus decision making.

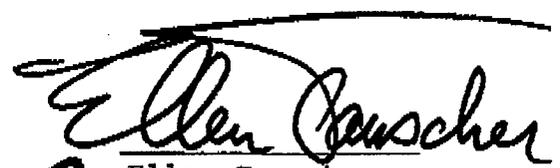
Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. We urge you to fully and fairly implement the dedicated yield provisions of the CVPIA in compliance with the requirements of the law.

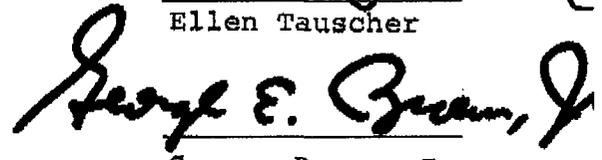
Sincerely,

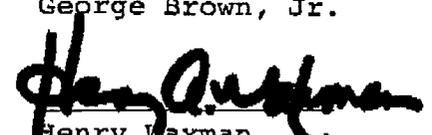
  
George Miller

  
Howard Berman

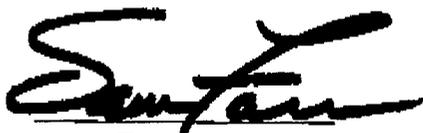
  
Ronald Dellums

  
Ellen Tauscher

  
George Brown, Jr.

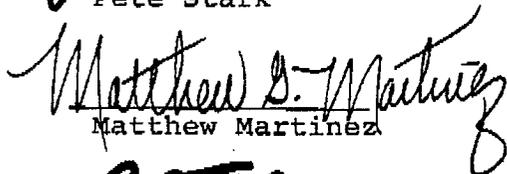
  
Henry Waxman

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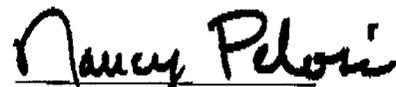
  
Sam Farr

  
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Anna Eshoo

  
Elizabeth Furse