



Association of Northwest Steelheaders

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Bob Rees
Executive Director

June 17, 2015

From: Association of Northwest Steelheaders

To: Senator Jeff Merkley, Senator Ron Wyden and Congressman Peter Defazio

RE: Drought Legislation Overriding Protections for California's Central Valley Salmon Runs

The Association of Northwest Steelheaders (ANWS) is dedicated to enhancing and protecting fisheries and their habitats for today and the future. ANWS serves all residents of the Pacific Northwest who value strong salmon and steelhead runs and clean water. We write today to express our significant concerns about a number of media reports and statements by members of Congress describing closed-door negotiations in Congress regarding legislation which could weaken or eliminate bedrock protections for Central Valley salmon populations. We strongly believe that any such negotiations should occur in the open, with input from all interested parties. We would also like to go on record stating that we would oppose any proposed federal drought legislation which would weaken protections for salmon runs in the California Central Valley and Bay-Delta Estuary. In years past, Oregon's coastal salmon fishing opportunity has been negatively impacted by the reduction or elimination of critically important federal protections for Central Valley salmon, resulting in collapsed salmon populations, lost recreational opportunity, thousands of lost jobs, and millions of dollars in lost income to our coastal communities.

As we have seen through the 2008 and 2009 closures of salmon fishing south of Cape Falcon, not just anglers, guides, and charter operators were affected by the lack of fishing. Entire coastal communities and salmon fishing infrastructure felt the repercussions of these closures including the tackle stores, repair shops, restaurants, and ports. These closures devastated Oregon's salmon fishing communities.

It is vitally important to continue the protections provided to Central Valley salmon under the Central Valley Project Improvement Act and Endangered Species Act to assure that salmon can return to their native rivers for spawning and that smolts can reach the ocean to grow to maturity and thus provide economic benefits to our coastal communities, which sustainably harvest the salmon while providing world-class recreational opportunities. We also urge you to continue to support federal efforts to restore salmon runs in the Central Valley's San Joaquin River under the San Joaquin River Restoration Program.

Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Bob Rees
Executive Director

*Anglers dedicated to enhancing and protecting fisheries and their habitats for today and the future.
The Association of Northwest Steelheaders is a 501(C)3 corporation: 91-1031100*