

Senator Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Barbara Boxer  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

September 8, 2015

Dear Senators Feinstein and Boxer:

As members of the Board of Supervisors of San Francisco, Marin, San Mateo and Contra Costa counties, we are writing to thank you for your longstanding support of forward-looking water policies. As we review the California Emergency Drought Relief Act of 2015 (S. 1894), we urge you to continue to focus on real solutions as the legislation moves forward, including prioritizing smart investments that allow us to make better use of our limited water supply during this unprecedented drought. We are deeply concerned that H.R. 2898, which recently passed the House of Representatives, could have a devastating impact on the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary and the economies it supports. The environmentally destructive and divisive components of that bill have no place in legislation for California.

Our communities rely on the natural resources of the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary, including adequate water quality, flows and habitat for fish and wildlife. Our economy depends on a healthy Bay and Delta for our commercial and recreational fishing industries, tourist industry, real estate industry, and our exceptional quality of life. The current drought threatens to have devastating impacts on this magnificent but fragile estuary and these industries. The drought has also exacerbated the long-term water quality degradation in the Delta that has resulted from three decades of increased exports, with impacts to local drinking water supplies.

We support federal legislation that takes a 21<sup>st</sup> century approach to make us stronger and more resilient during this drought for the long run. Whatever happens in the near future in terms of rainfall, most believe we are in a “new normal” in California, one that requires new, forward-looking ways of managing this scarce and invaluable natural resource.

Unfortunately, legislation such as H.R. 2898 reignites old conflicts and puts the health of the San Francisco Bay-Delta in jeopardy. H.R. 2898 overrides protections for native salmon runs, takes water from habitats that are essential for birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway, and undermines water quality standards that ensure the water in the Bay-Delta is safe for drinking, irrigation, and wildlife habitat. H.R. 2898 replaces scientifically-justified limits on water operations with political judgments and could have devastating consequences for our fish and wildlife that are already struggling during this drought. San Francisco Bay Area governments have invested millions of dollars in wetland restoration projects to provide flood control benefits and improve habitat for our fish and wildlife. H.R. 2898 diverts the fresh water needed to help these restoration projects succeed.

Furthermore, H.R. 2898 proposes solutions that would cause substantial economic harm to our communities. By threatening salmon runs that migrate through the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary, the bill puts thousands of fishing jobs at risk. Fishermen fear that the impacts from H.R. 2898 could force a complete shutdown of the salmon fishery like the one that occurred in 2008-2009. Such a shutdown would harm marina operators, boating supply businesses, bait shops, tackle manufacturers, fish processors, and

restaurants, in addition to commercial fishermen, recreational fishermen, and charter boat operations. These jobs support families in the Delta and in our cities, as well as communities all along the California and Oregon coasts.

Our fishing industry is part of our heritage and is the defining feature of Fisherman's Wharf, the Delta, and dozens of other communities along California's coast. San Francisco Bay is also an international tourist destination. By degrading the quality of the Bay's water and depleting fish and wildlife populations, H.R. 2898 puts at risk all of the industries that depend upon the crowds that flock to San Francisco and surrounding cities.

Legislation is needed that benefits all Californians and protects our natural resources. Like Congressman Huffman's H.R. 2983, effective legislation will promote innovative new policies and increased funding to encourage water recycling, stormwater capture, water-use efficiency, and other solutions. We appreciate that some of the provisions in S. 1894 adopt a similar approach. These approaches, and others like them, reflect the steps our Bay and Delta communities are already taking, with a renewed focus on how we can promote effective solutions locally. The State of California is also focusing on these key tools through the efforts of the State Water Resources Control Board and emergency drought legislation.

The serious water supply shortages being experienced across the state are not the result of environmental protections; therefore, it is important that our response to the drought focus on real solutions that address the real problem of demand management. In contrast, H.R.2898 is an enormous step in the wrong direction, and we strongly oppose the bill.

We appreciate the serious compromises needed to adequately address impacts of the current and future droughts and respect the leadership you have provided during this crisis. Rather than a divisive approach that favors certain interests over others, we urge you to continue to work with all stakeholders on solutions that do not negatively impact the economies, farmers, communities, and environments of the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The Bay Area has shown that we do not need to choose between a vibrant economy and a healthy ecosystem. We know that effective solutions to difficult problems require innovative thinking that looks to the future. The Bay Area is a global pioneer in using technology to develop new approaches to the challenges that face us. This kind of creativity is essential in response to the drought. We are eager to work with you to suggest specific examples of such innovative approaches in the water arena.

Again, thank you for playing such a key, long-term, and positive role in helping California manage our water supply in a smart, effective way. Thank you, as well, for considering our views.

Sincerely,



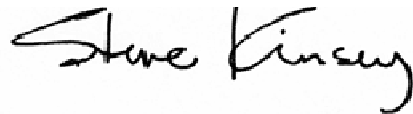
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Scott Wiener  
Member, San Francisco Board of Supervisors



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Dave Pine  
Member, San Mateo County Board of Supervisors



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Steve Kinsey  
Member, Marin County Board of Supervisors



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Mary Nejedly Piepho  
Member, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors