



FRIENDS OF THE RIVER

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State Creates Safety Net for California Rivers

New Law Safeguards Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers from Trump, Congress

Seven hundred and fifty miles of California's Wild and Scenic Rivers were protected from the Trump administration and Congress when Governor Edmund G. Brown signed AB 2975 into law last night. The state law, authored by Assemblymember Laura Friedman (D-Glendale), provides state protection for a federally protected river in California if Congress or President Trump removes a river from the federal system or weakens the protection provided by federal law.

"California's wild and scenic rivers are worth defending," said Assemblymember Laura Friedman (D-Glendale). "AB 2975 ensures that regardless of the attempts from Washington to roll back environmental protections, we'll continue to do everything within our power to fight back and preserve our natural resources for Californians today, and for generations to come."

AB 2975 is California's latest response to anti-environmental efforts of the Trump administration and Republican majority in Congress to delist national monuments and weaken protections for federal lands. Conservationists fear similar threats to already federally protected rivers and other wild places in California. The House of Representatives, for example, has voted three times to eliminate federal protection for a portion of Merced Wild River to allow for an expanded reservoir.

"We sponsored this bill to defend our federal wild and scenic rivers from the Trump administration and members of Congress that are attacking our environmental protections left and right," said Ron Stork, Senior Policy Advocate for Friends of the River. "We're thrilled California is standing up for these iconic rivers and inspired by Assemblymember Friedman's leadership."

The bill requires the California Natural Resources Agency Secretary to hold a public meeting if Congress or President Trump were to eliminate or weaken protection for any of the 750 miles of federal wild and scenic rivers in California in existence as of January 1, 2018, and not already protected in the state wild and scenic rivers system. The Secretary can then choose to administratively add the federal river to the state system. The Secretary's authority to add a river to the state system and any protection afforded a river under the proposed statute sunsets as of Dec. 31, 2025. The California Legislature can also consider permanently adding any of these rivers to the state system through legislation.

The state safety net applies to segments of some of California's most popular white water rivers on the west slope of the Sierra Nevada, including the Tuolumne, Merced, Kings, and Kern.

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