

**Defenders of Wildlife * Earthjustice * Golden Gate Salmon Association
League of Conservation Voters * National Audubon Society
Natural Resources Defense Council
Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman's Associations
Sierra Club * The Bay Institute**

November 30, 2018

RE: Oppose House Rider that Threatens Fishing Jobs and California's Bay-Delta Estuary

Dear Member:

On behalf of the undersigned conservation groups and fishing organizations, we are writing to urge you to oppose the new appropriations rider recently proposed in the House that would undermine protections for salmon, thousands of west coast fishing jobs, and the health of California's rivers and Bay-Delta estuary. This proposed rider would extend, without any hearing or public review, the temporary operational provisions of subtitle J of the 2016 Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN Act) until the year 2028, which would give the Trump Administration additional authority to override protections critical for sustaining California's salmon runs and other endangered fish species. The rider would also authorize hundreds of millions of dollars of new spending on dams and water storage projects throughout the West, giving the Trump Administration an infusion of cash for environmentally harmful projects such as the proposed raise of Shasta Dam in California, a project that violates State law, and would destroy Native American sacred sites and harm fish and wildlife.

The operational provisions of the 2016 WIIN Act were explicitly a short-term measure to respond to California's historic drought, and these provisions do not sunset until 2021. There is no reason to rush to extend these provisions during the Lame Duck, given that they already will remain in effect for several years, California's historic drought ended in 2017, and they were intended to be a short term measure. These provisions are inconsistent with California law and violate the requirements of biological opinions protecting salmon and other native fish under the Endangered Species Act. As such, they are likely to lead to extensive litigation and undermine progress on long-term solutions. While these provisions of the WIIN Act attempt to weaken existing protections, State and federal agencies have already concluded that greater protections for salmon and other endangered fish species are necessary to avoid extinction.

Congress should not give the Trump Administration additional authority to undermine environmental protections in California, which would threaten thousands of fishing jobs in California, Oregon and Washington that depend on Endangered Species Act protections for salmon in the Bay-Delta. Rather than negotiating to extend the anti-environmental provisions of the WIIN Act in the Lame Duck, in 2019 the new Congress should develop funding for sustainable water solutions for communities throughout the west.

We strongly urge you to oppose inclusion of this poison pill rider in any appropriations bills or other legislation during Lame Duck.

Sincerely,

Defenders of Wildlife

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