

**Defenders of Wildlife * Earthjustice * Friends of the River * Golden State Salmon Association*
* The Northern California Council, Fly Fishers International *
Resource Renewal Institute * Restore the Delta * San Francisco Baykeeper *
South Yuba River Citizens League * Tuolumne River Trust *
Winnemem Wintu Tribe**

May 19, 2025

Dear Members of Congress:

On behalf of the Winnemem Wintu Tribe, undersigned organizations and our millions of members and supporters, we write to express our opposition to Section 80203 of the House Natural Resource Committee's budget reconciliation recommendations, "Surface Water Storage Enhancement." This section proposes \$2 billion in spending and eliminates cost-sharing requirements in what appears to be an effort designed, in whole or part, to enable the construction of a largely shelved water storage project in California—expanding Shasta Dam. Because this section would be both economically and environmentally harmful, we urge Members to **OPPOSE Section 80203** of the House budget reconciliation package.

First, Sections 80203 and 80204 conflict with more than a century of Reclamation law, eliminating the legal obligation that federal taxpayers be paid back for their investments in covered projects.

Second, if the Secretary attempts to use Section 80203 for the Shasta Dam raise, this sets up a conflict with the State of California since the project conflicts with state law. An expanded Shasta Dam would inundate a portion of the McCloud River protected by the California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Under that state law, no agency of the State of California may assist or cooperate in the raising of Shasta Dam. Accordingly, state agencies are legally prohibited from issuing required permits or otherwise facilitating the dam raise. The State of California has repeatedly opposed this project, including lawsuits by the Attorney General of the State of California.

Third, this project would harm Native American Tribes, salmon fishermen, and the environment. The Bureau of Reclamation has admitted that this project would destroy sacred sites of the Winnemem Wintu Tribe. State and federal agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have concluded that the project would harm native salmon runs that, when healthy, support thousands of fishing jobs on the West Coast.

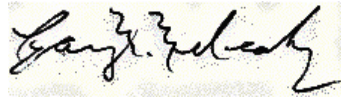
Fourth, to the extent that the Secretary and the courts interpret Section 80203 to also apply to Water Infrastructure Improvements to the Nation Act (WIIN Act) federal projects, this bill would propose to eliminate the legal obligation under the WIIN Act that non-federal funding will cover at least half of the cost of such projects, which also puts federal taxpayers at risk.

For all of these reasons and more, we urge you to oppose Section 80203 of the House Natural Resources Committee's budget reconciliation recommendations. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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Defenders of Wildlife



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