

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

July 1, 2014

The Honorable Jerry Brown  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown,

The ongoing drought in California threatens to inflict devastating economic damage on the state and the West of our nation. Reservoirs across the state are well below normal levels, and there is no remaining snowpack to refill these vital stores. As the forecasts from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Integrated Drought Information System predict only a continuation or worsening of the dry conditions over the coming year, it is crucial that the scarce remaining water in storage be stewarded for the beneficial use of the population of our state.

Yet this spring, the Bureau of Reclamation and the State Water Resources Control Board drained the major reservoirs on the Sacramento, American, Feather, and Stanislaus rivers of vast quantities of water in order to comply with environmental laws and regulations.

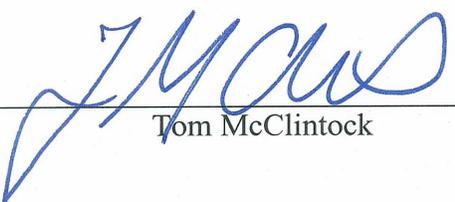
The Endangered Species Act requires that federal and state agencies utilize a "reasonable and prudent" standard in determining what actions they will take to protect listed species. However, no rational understanding of "reasonable and prudent" can justify these massive releases of water that endanger the livelihoods of the people of California.

As Governor of California, you are able to request that President Obama convene the Endangered Species Committee (ESC). Once assembled, the ESC will have the authority to grant any and all necessary exemptions from the Endangered Species Act in order to preserve the remaining water stored in California reservoirs and prioritize water for municipal, industrial, and agricultural uses until such time as the underlying law may be reformed in order to more appropriately balance environmental protection with meeting the government's basic responsibility to steward our valuable water supplies.

We urgently request that you ask President Obama to convene the ESC for the purposes of examining the Endangered Species Act's restrictions as it applies to the Central Valley Project and the California State Water Project.

Thank you in advance for your timely response.

Sincerely,

  
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Tom McClintock

  
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Devin Nunes