

October 23, 2009

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) sent a letter to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today regarding potential changes to the state’s water policy that may be considered by the California legislature.

The letter urges the Governor to take into account input from the families, farmers and businesses that live in the communities surrounding the San Joaquin Delta as these changes as considered. It also reiterates the Congressman’s plan to closely monitor initiatives that require federal participation and his concern about any proposals that lay groundwork for a peripheral canal.

This letter to the Governor also comes on the heels of Congressman McNerney calling on Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to actively solicit input from the residents who live in the San Joaquin Delta area and ensure their seat at the table as any federal proposals on the Delta are considered.

The text of the letter to Governor Schwarzenegger is below:

October 23, 2009

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

As California legislators and agencies evaluate significant changes to water policy in our state, I am writing to bring your attention to matters of federal concern. Initiatives to improve water quality and availability in California are dependent upon coordination by federal, state, and local agencies. I will closely monitor any actions, particularly those that require federal participation, and will continue to insist that water proposals provide benefit to families, farmers, and businesses in the counties encompassing the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Drought conditions are a serious concern in California, and federal, state, and local partners should work together to provide relief. Efforts to improve water supplies in drought-affected areas, however, must also protect clean water availability for the four million people living in the counties that are most directly dependent on the San Joaquin Delta. I am honored to represent hardworking families in Contra Costa County and San Joaquin County – two of the five “Delta

Counties” – and we are committed to working with you to advance effective water solutions. However, the voices of families, farmers, and businesses in San Joaquin Delta communities must be heard as federal and state collaborative processes advance.

I am deeply concerned by initiatives that may be intended to lay the groundwork for a canal that diverts additional fresh water from the San Joaquin Delta. Such a canal would further erode water quality for several million people. A canal and related proposals are expected to threaten jobs by turning family farms into uninhabitable salty marshlands and could raise water rates by decreasing the supply of clean water for families and businesses in the San Joaquin Delta area. Public health and economic opportunity in Contra Costa County, San Joaquin County, and other San Joaquin Delta communities should not be sacrificed in pursuit of expensive and counterproductive water projects. I will oppose federal support for water proposals that threaten the millions of people that call the San Joaquin Delta home.

As you know, a Memorandum of Understanding for San Joaquin Delta projects was recently signed by the Department of the Interior and several other federal agencies. The memorandum pledges to develop a coordinated work plan for the San Joaquin Delta in consultation with state and local partners. I have requested that the Department of the Interior take into account feedback from residents of the San Joaquin Delta Counties, and I urge you to do the same. Together, I believe we can advance helpful solutions that benefit every region of California.

Thank you for your attention to this letter, and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress