

Central Valley Business Times

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Central Valley Rep. Jerry McNerney, D-Pleasanton, on Wednesday declared his opposition to state plans for a peripheral canal to suck water out of the Sacramento River and convey it around the Delta to users south of the Delta.

His opposition is believed to be the first by a member of Congress to the latest iteration of the peripheral canal, a plan that was rejected by California voters in 1982.

In remarks on the floor of the House of Representatives Wednesday, Mr. McNerney said he supported efforts by landowners in the Delta area who are fighting attempts by the state to conduct surveys and studies without permission on private land.

“Without permission, the state is sending its employees onto private farmland to conduct the surveys and studies it would need to build a canal,” Mr. McNerney said.

He says a peripheral canal or tunnel that takes large amounts of fresh water from the Delta “would devastate families, farmers, and businesses in our community. A canal will cause saltwater intrusion, destroy thousands of acres of farmland, and devastate our water quality”

An alternative to a canal that has been suggested would be a tunnel beneath the Delta to deliver water southward before it entered the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, the largest estuary on the West Coast.

“Congressman McNerney is completely correct in his assessment of what a peripheral canal would do to the environmental and economic health of Delta communities,” says Barbara

Barrigan-Parrilla, executive director of the group Restore the Delta of Stockton. “We applaud his willingness to speak out on what the canal would do to the people of the Delta.”