

April 21, 2011

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) today sent a letter to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in response to a public comment period currently underway on improving the health of the Delta. The EPA is asking members of the public to submit input on steps that should be taken to improve water quality in the Delta. Input and findings from the process will be taken into account as future proposals on the Delta are considered.

In the letter, Congressman McNerney calls on the EPA to closely consider public comments received from residents of the San Joaquin Delta region. He also urges the EPA to oppose any policies or projects that further erode water quality for Delta farmers, families, and businesses.

More information about the public comment period can be found online [here](#) and the deadline to submit input is this Monday, April 25. Comments may be submitted online, via mail, or fax as follows:

- At <http://www.regulations.gov> by entering docket number EPA-R09-OW-2010-0976 and then selecting “Submit a Comment.”
- Via mail to Erin Foresman, WTR 3, US Environmental Protection Agency, 75 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105.
- Via fax to 415-947-3537, attention Erin Foresman

The full text of Congressman McNerney’s letter is below.

April 21, 2011

Ms. Erin Foresman
WTR 3
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for Water Quality Challenges in the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary

Dear Ms. Foresman:

Thank you for soliciting public input on actions the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) could potentially take to address water quality challenges in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. As EPA considers future policy decisions, I insist that you closely consider the public comments you receive from residents of the San Joaquin Delta region.

I am honored to represent large portions of Contra Costa and San Joaquin Counties – two of the five “Delta Counties.” The San Joaquin Delta is a vitally important estuary, and its health is critical to the entire state of California. The Delta supports a statewide agricultural industry that generates more than \$30 billion in revenue annually and provides drinking water for tens of millions of California residents. Similarly, the state’s salmon fishing industries – and the thousands of jobs they sustain – depend on the health of the Delta estuary.

The San Joaquin Delta is far more, however, than a simple water resource for the state. The Delta is a unique place with a distinct economic and cultural heritage. The five Delta Counties are home to approximately four million people and a rich agricultural tradition that produces crops as varied as asparagus, pears, corn, and tomatoes. EPA **must** show respect for San Joaquin Delta residents as the agency moves forward on any potential actions.

I recognize that the advanced notice of proposed rulemaking currently open for comment is

focused on the needs of aquatic species, which is an important consideration and a cornerstone of EPA's mission. However, EPA is also charged with protecting water quality for the benefit of drinking water supplies, public health, and agricultural users. Developing good, balanced policies that support all of these goals is challenging – but possible.

EPA is also collaborating closely with federal, state, and local government agencies and other key stakeholders engaged in Delta restoration initiatives, such as the Bay Delta Conservation Plan. I am deeply concerned by proposals to construct new conveyance systems that could divert large amounts of water around or underneath the Delta, and I will oppose projects that are harmful to Delta residents. Because of its duty to protect water quality for a variety of purposes, I call on EPA to ensure that any new policies guarantee the best possible water quality for Delta residents. EPA should oppose any policies or projects that further erode water quality for Delta farmers, families, and businesses.

I appreciate your consideration of my letter. In your reply, I also request detailed responses to the following questions:

- 1) How many comments did EPA receive in response to the advanced notice of proposed rulemaking from residents of the five Delta Counties?
- 2) How will EPA factor the input of San Joaquin Delta residents into future decision making?
- 3) What steps will EPA take to guarantee the best possible water quality for Delta residents, including family farmers?

Thank you for your attention to the needs of San Joaquin Delta residents. I look forward to EPA's reply.

Sincerely,

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress