

*Calls the Bill a "Brazen Attempt to Send Our Water South"*

*Feb. 29, 2012*

*Washington, D.C.* – As the House leadership rushed to pass a deeply-flawed bill-- the so-called Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley Water Reliability Act-- Congressman Jerry McNerney used every available tool to fight the bill (H.R. 1837). McNerney introduced two amendments to the bill that would have protected the Delta and the precious water resources that are vital to the residents of Northern California. Additionally, he sent letters to his colleagues urging them to oppose the bill and spoke on the House floor in strong opposition to the bill.

"This bill is deeply-flawed. It is a clear case of robbing Peter to pay Paul. It would steal water from the Delta region and send it south, creating a bigger problem and forever devastating the Delta. My amendments to this bad piece of legislation would protect our water supplies from this brazen attempt to ship our water south," said Rep. McNerney.

The bill is a water grab designed to help some parts of California at the expense of others. It would siphon mass quantities of water from the Delta region, ship precious resources elsewhere, and severely degrade the quality of the water that would remain in the Delta. The two McNerney amendments would prevent some of the most harmful provisions of the bill from taking effect until the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with appropriate agencies, determines that the legislation will not harm water supplies for drinking or agriculture in the five Delta Counties (Contra Costa County, Sacramento County, San Joaquin County, Solano County, and Yolo County). The amendments were defeated largely along party lines.

"This bill was written without any input from the San Joaquin Delta communities, farmers, and businesses that will be devastated by its enactment, and it should not move forward. To steal from one community for the benefit of another is completely shortsighted and unacceptable. I will continue to stand up for the farmers, families, and small business owners who rely upon a healthy San Joaquin Delta for their livelihoods. My colleagues who pushed this bad piece of legislation forward should have to answer for playing games with the precious water supplies in California," said Rep. McNerney (CA-11).

Congressman McNerney spoke on the House floor during general debate on Wednesday afternoon in strong opposition to the bill. His remarks as prepared for delivery are below.

*As prepared for delivery:*

Mr./Madam Speaker,

I rise to express my strong opposition to H.R. 1837. This legislation will do tremendous harm to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, an area I am honored to represent.

The San Joaquin Delta is a treasure for California and the entire nation. The Delta flows through five counties and sustains major cities, small towns, and lush farmland. Agriculture is the economic backbone of the Delta, generating nearly 800 million dollars in revenue in 2009.

Unfortunately, the Delta ecosystem is in decline due to excessive water shipments to the south. Poor water quality is now a threat to the region's agricultural economy and heritage. H.R. 1837 would ship even more water out of the Delta, turning this precious estuary into a salty, stagnant marsh, crushing the local economy, and costing the Delta region thousands of jobs.

This bill is a blatant water grab meant to help some communities at the expense of others. Contrary to the conservative principles that its proponents claim to cherish, H.R. 1837 uses the power of the federal government to undermine states' rights.

Dozens of local governments, businesses, agricultural advocates, environmental groups, and others oppose H.R. 1837. I have letters from those groups, and I request unanimous consent to enter them into the record.

H.R. 1837 would devastate my region of California, but folks from other states should also oppose this bill. With little debate and complete disregard for the consequences, this bill sets a dangerous precedent that the federal government can undermine state water laws developed

over decades. Your state could be next.

This bill is a shameful attempt to rewrite California water laws to benefit a few select water users, regardless of how much harm is done to other parts of the state. Democrats and Republicans should stand united in our desire to block this legislation from ever becoming law. I urge my colleagues in the strongest terms possible to oppose H.R. 1837. Thank you, and I yield back.