

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 3, 2015

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan, Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader McConnell, Leader Pelosi, and Leader Reid,

We write to express our deep concerns with the process being used to negotiate western drought legislation. As of today, more than two weeks have passed since House Democratic staff was provided an update on the status of negotiations. Meanwhile, we are informed that a closed group including attorneys for major irrigation interests has continued working in secret on a bill that includes many provisions we have long opposed, with the goal of trying to include it—at the last minute—in the omnibus spending legislation.

This silence and secret maneuvering only heightens concerns that our House counterparts are not negotiating in good faith and that any bill brought to mark-up in the coming weeks will not reflect our views due to our inability to provide input. This is particularly concerning given the fact that previous drought bills, including the House-passed H.R. 2898, contained numerous environmentally damaging provisions that would harm our congressional districts' water quality and supply, disadvantage our farmers and fishermen, and violate tribal trust responsibilities.

We are also concerned that there are legislative efforts underway to micromanage the operations of California's water supply system in a manner that would undermine the Endangered Species Act, protections afforded to endangered California species under existing biological opinions, and the Clean Water Act. The Obama Administration, the state of California, nearly the entire California House Democratic Delegation, and other Delegations from Oregon, Washington, and Arizona have said repeatedly that such an approach is unacceptable, yet some of our colleagues continue to push for harmful operations language.

It has been indicated that an omnibus funding bill is the intended vehicle for the drought legislation that results from this process, which is deeply concerning. Given the magnitude and gravity of this legislation for all Western states, we believe it should be thoroughly and thoughtfully considered, not hastily included in a must-pass funding bill. Both the House and Senate bills include long-term provisions

which have implications far beyond the current drought and California. As such, we request that the final legislation be considered as a stand-alone bill.

We appreciate your attention to these issues and hope that you will work to keep any drought legislation out of a must-pass government funding bill. In doing so, you will ensure that this legislation is properly vetted in order to prevent an erosion of environmental laws not only in California, but in the entire western United States.

Sincerely,

Janet Hoffmann

and Shoo

Sam Fan

Mich Shampson

Mark DSC

Joy Mihay

Jackie Speier

Gajaramendi

Doris Matsui

Ami B