



July 10th, 2017

Dear Representative,

On behalf of California Trout and our membership, we strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 23 (Valadao, R-CA). Since 1971, CalTrout has worked to ensure there will be resilient populations of wild fish thriving in healthy waters for the future well-being of all Californians. We represent thousands of anglers, conservationists and those interested in protecting the delicate balance of our fragile water system throughout California. We will not support any bill that would lessen the protections for salmon, steelhead and other fish and wildlife species in California's Bay-Delta watershed and throughout the State.

H.R. 23 is simply another version of previous bills that were opposed by the State of California and countless conservation organizations. In years past, nearly identical bills (H.R. 3964 (Valadao, R-CA) and H.R. 5781 (Valadao, R-CA) in 2014, and H.R. 2898 (Valadao, R-CA) in 2015), were successfully opposed, and we are writing to ensure that H.R. 23 meets a similar fate.

In addition to gutting critical federal environmental protections in California, H.R. 23 also preempts a wide range of state environmental laws and would prevent the State of California from protecting and managing its own water and wildlife resources. In addition to these provisions focused on California, the bill also includes titles that would reduce public and environmental reviews of new dams and water infrastructure across the Western states.

H.R. 23 would override the Endangered Species Act, increasing the risk that winter-run Chinook salmon and other native fish species are driven extinct. Further, H.R. 23 could devastate wildlife refuges that provide habitat for millions of birds that migrate along the Pacific Flyway by undermining the refuges' water rights and threatening critically important funding sources. H.R. 23 would also eviscerate the 1992 Central Valley Project Improvement Act, eliminating instream flows to benefit salmon and funding for habitat restoration projects, which help to mitigate the adverse effects of the Central Valley Project. The impacts from these provisions would reverberate along the entire West Coast, affecting fishing jobs and related industries in Oregon and Washington that depend on salmon from California's Central Valley and threatening populations of waterfowl and shorebirds that migrate to and from Alaska and Canada each year.

In addition to these provisions focused on gutting environmental protections in California, H.R. 23 also includes several titles that would weaken environmental protection across the western United States. For instance, the bill's dam permitting provisions would give the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation unprecedented control over the environmental review process and could undermine

the ability of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and N.O.A.A. Fisheries to share expertise and inform the development of major infrastructure investments. These provisions are necessarily complex because of the enormous environmental, safety, and water supply concerns, and creating a “one-stop shop” at the Bureau of Reclamation will not make matters better.

H.R. 23 also threatens thousands of fishing jobs in California, Oregon, and beyond that depend on healthy salmon runs from the Bay-Delta. The closure of the salmon fishery in 2008 and 2009 resulted in thousands of lost jobs in these states. The livelihoods and recreational interests of anglers, farmers, fishing guides, tackle shops, environmentalists, and communities across California and along the West Coast depend on the environmental protections that H.R. 23 would eliminate.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to oppose H.R. 23. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Curtis Knight
Executive Director
California Trout

