



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors

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November 15, 2024

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
1401 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jimmy Panetta
304 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) (S. 4367/H.R. 8812) – Support for Salinas River language in H.R. 8812

Dear Congresswoman Lofgren and Congressman Panetta:

On behalf of the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors, I write to express our support for the Salinas River language found in the House version of the Water Resources Development (WRDA) Act, H.R. 8812, Sec. 201(a)(8) (found on page 154, beginning at line 9). The House bill calls for a “[p]roject for flood risk management and ecosystem restoration, Salinas River, California,” although this provision does not appear in the Senate companion bill, S. 4367.

As you know, the Salinas River is a highly modified ecosystem due to the construction and operation of two dams and reservoirs, built in the 1950s and 1960s. With proper channel maintenance, precipitation flows allowed for scouring of the river channel, leaving a clear channel for capacity flow, free of sandbars and excess vegetation. The channelization of the riverbed in the late 1940s and early 1950s brought levees to help control these precipitation flows away from farmland, municipalities, and public infrastructure.

With these modifications to the river flow system, an unintended consequence was realized when vegetation growth increased (and scouring decreased) after reservoir water releases became standard practice for groundwater recharge during the irrigation season (and then mandatory for ecological reasons). Because of this consequence, stakeholders began river channel maintenance to maintain capacity flow and vegetation control, primarily for flood control and mitigation.

The Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study called for in the House WRDA bill would primarily consider measures necessary to provide flood risk reduction along the river channel and determine if there is federal interest in undertaking a flood control project to protect farmland, infrastructure, and buildings.

We urge you to support inclusion in the WRDA bill of the provision regarding the Salinas River in H.R. 8812 in any internal discussions, floor votes, or negotiations with the Senate. On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, I thank you for your continued support of this important matter impacting the residents of the County of Monterey.

Sincerely,

DRAFT

Glenn Church, Chair
Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable Alex Padilla, U.S. Senator for California
The Honorable Laphonza Butler, U.S. Senator for California



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