

## **The Grinch Who Stole Christmas from California**

With the passing of Christmas, Californians yet again did not receive their ongoing wish from Congress or the Administration: an end to the man-made drought plaguing the Golden State. In fact, it has been over two years since Congress was first asked to step in and end this needless calamity.

Recently, California issued its bleakest initial water supply forecast in state history—allocations of just five percent for 2010. Our state's grim water crisis is largely due to limited water supplies in the Delta because of Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections for the California Delta Smelt, which is a three-inch bait fish.

In 2008, a court ruling found that operations of pumps in the Delta may be harming the Delta Smelt by reversing the direction of flow in the Delta during the spawning and early juvenile phase. Subsequently, interim restrictions on pumping will be in place between late December and June each year until California finds a solution.

This flawed implementation of the ESA has adversely impacted more than 25 million people, of which include Southern California residents, and hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland which receive water that passes through the Delta. In fact, our nation's most fertile farmland has been transformed into desert and unemployment has skyrocketed to historic levels as a result of this court ruling.

Rather than provide the gift of immediate relief by authorizing critical water pumping projects, the Administration continues to delay the advancement of these projects, thereby holding California's farmers, businesses, and families hostage to the interests of a small bait fish. Instead of depriving Californians their water and livelihood, I have cosponsored The Turn on the Pumps Act which would restore the flow of water in California by waiving the ESA provisions responsible for Delta pumping restrictions.

However, because Congressional Democrats will not even allow debate on the California man-made drought and have instead insisted that we only study the problem more, I have also signed the discharge petition for The Turn on the Pumps Act. If 218 Members of Congress sign this petition, the legislation would immediately be brought to the House floor.

For whatever reason—maybe their hearts, like the Grinch, are two sizes too small—it is appalling that the Administration and Congressional Democrats have not acted to restore water to dry California communities. Instead, they have prioritized the needs of a three-inch fish over those of millions of Californians. Although we must focus on a long-term comprehensive Delta solution, Californians must have immediate relief from the economic and social hardship imposed by stringent environmental regulations.

**GARY G. MILLER**  
Member of Congress