



SOUTH SAN JOAQUIN  
IRRIGATION DISTRICT

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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March 14, 2016

Supervisor Dick Monteith  
Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors  
1010 10th St.  
Modesto, CA 95353

Dear Supervisor Monteith,

Both the State of California and United States government invest a tremendous amount of money and regulatory focus on protecting endangered salmon species, but other than additional flow requirements, they have done little to address other stressors that affect salmon populations, such as predation by introduced, non-native fish species.

The scientific understanding of the role predator fish have in low salmon-survival numbers in California rivers and waterways has advanced tremendously since the 1990s through a number of studies by federal agencies and independent researchers. However, fishery management practices have not kept pace, and outdated legislation and regulations actively work against efforts to restore salmon and steelhead populations in the state.

We are writing today to share recent testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives by one of the leading experts on fish predation, and ask for your support to not only continue studies on this matter, but more importantly to support regulatory and legislative changes to actively implement predator suppression programs in vulnerable California waterways. Such efforts are already under way in Oregon and Washington, and are much needed in California.

Politically, there is growing recognition of the problem of predator fish. In 2015, the House of Representatives passed an amendment by Rep. Jeff Denham to focus on the predation problem, and Sen. Dianne Feinstein's recently introduced water bill has specific language to require the removal of predator fish from the Stanislaus River to study the effects such actions would have on salmon numbers. Your support of these and similar measures would not only benefit endangered salmon, but also promote effective ecological water management that benefits the environment, the economy, and the people of California.

At Oakdale and South San Joaquin Irrigation Districts, we are intensely focused on the health of our watershed and waterways. We have worked extensively with Doug Demko, president of FISHBIO, a fisheries consulting firm and one of the leading experts on non-native fish predation. His Feb. 10 testimony before the House Subcommittee on Water, Power, and Oceans is enclosed with this letter. Links to videos of his testimony, as well as Rep. Denham's and Sen. Feinstein's legislation are below.

We thank you in advance for your continued attention and support toward implementation of programs such as these that will provide benefits for agriculture and environment alike.

Rep. Denham's Amendment to H.R. 2578 and Sen. Feinstein's Comprehensive Water Bill: (Secs. 201-204 focus on predator fish) can be found here: <http://www.savethestan.org/predation-legislation/>  
Doug Demko's Feb. 10, 2016 Testimony Highlights can be found here: <http://www.savethestan.org/doug-demko-testimony/>

Yours Truly,

Handwritten signature of Peter M. Rietkerk in black ink.

Peter M. Rietkerk  
General Manager, SSJID

Handwritten signature of Steve Knell in black ink.

Steve Knell  
General Manager, OID