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Save California Salmon Statement on President Trump's Memorandum Regarding Water Transports to Southern California and Big Ag

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January 21, 2025 - Yesterday, President Trump signed a memorandum titled Putting People over Fish: Stopping Radical Environmentalism to Provide Water to Southern California. The title suggests a water scarcity that does not exist and by prioritizing increased water diversions from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, California's economy, waterways, salmon populations, and Indigenous communities are seriously threatened. Statements from Southern California water agencies, Tribes, and the governor demonstrate no water shortage in So. California, but there are serious infrastructure considerations.

“The new Trump administration is picking up where it left off four years ago. This new memorandum continues a pattern of prioritizing industrial agriculture above the needs of urban water users. Under the last Trump presidency, his policies led to a 50%-90% decrease in salmon populations and serious pollution issues in California’s largest watersheds. California’s waterways are still feeling the impacts of these policies. The commercial and recreational salmon harvest has been shut down for the last three years. This has been devastating to Northern California economies,” said Regina Chichizola of Save California Salmon.

“The notion that water flowing into the Pacific Ocean is ‘wasteful’ ignores the livelihoods of Tribal and rural communities in Northern California. Salmon are more than simply wildlife. For Tribes, salmon are central to cultural identity, food security, and Traditional Knowledge. Salmon survival is tied to our health and the health of our rivers,” said Josa Talley of Save California Salmon.

Protecting water quality, Delta smelt, salmon, and other species is not "radical environmentalism"—it is a matter of protecting water supplies and economies. Rivers must have enough water to sustain businesses, prevent toxic algae blooms, and ensure clean water for downstream communities.

We can prepare for fire and to protect reliable water supplies. We urge the President to:

- Modernize urban and agricultural water use: Incentivizing conservation, reuse, and efficiency measures can reduce waste and lessen the strain on Northern California's rivers and enhance Southern California water storage.
- Support wildfire resilience through cultural and prescribed burns: Traditional fire practices by Indigenous Tribes have proven to reduce wildfire risk, protect homes, and maintain healthy forests without endangering waterways.
- Fund Emergency Preparedness and Response: The water supply issues in the LA fires were based on fire hydrant pressure, scheduled maintenance, and electricity. Due to the climate crisis, every town and city in California needs to have funded community preparation plans and localized water and power supplies.
- Collaborate with Tribal Nations: Consulting with Tribes is critical to understanding the cultural, ecological, and economic impacts of water policy.

Read the order here:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/putting-people-over-fish-stopping-radical-environmentalism-to-provide-water-to-southern-california/>

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