



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

July 10, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan:

I write to oppose H.R. 23, the "Gaining Responsibility on Water Act of 2017."

Water defines the west and for over a century Congress and the courts have consistently recognized that state law determines how water is developed and used. Western states have successfully resisted any attempted intrusion into this essential attribute of their sovereignty, including in the operation or construction of water projects involving the federal government. This bill overrides California water law, ignoring our state's prerogative to oversee our waters. Commandeering our laws for purposes defined in Washington is not right.

It is also not smart. California is the sixth-largest economy in the world, and its future depends on the wise and equitable use of its water. Making decisions requires listening to and balancing among the needs of California's nearly 40 million residents and taking into consideration economics, biodiversity and wildlife resources. All of this is best done at the state and local level – not in a polarized political climate 3,000 miles away.

Undermining state law is especially unwise today as California, with input from all stakeholders, is poised to make its boldest water infrastructure investments in decades: funding surface storage, updating an antiquated delta water conveyance, and adopting water-use efficiency targets.

I ask you to respect California's rights and shelve this bill.

Sincerely,

  
Edmund G. Brown Jr.

cc:

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Majority Leader

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, United States Senator

The Honorable Kamala Harris, United States Senator

California Congressional Delegation