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Contact: Kathryn Phillips, Director, Sierra Club California
Cell: 916-893-8494

Senator Feinstein's Water Bill Seriously Flawed

SACRAMENTO – Senator Dianne Feinstein released a new draft of drought legislation today that is intended to address California's water emergency.

The bill includes a number of important elements that will help the state, such as emergency funding for communities that have run out of water, funding for recycling and efficiency measures, and measures to support fish and wildlife.

However, on the balance the bill remains seriously flawed because it also contains funding for new dams that would not improve California's water system.

Additionally, the bill would provide funding towards environmentally damaging desalination plants that could prove wasteful and unnecessary. Just this week, the recently completed Carlsbad desalination plant was oversupplying extremely expensive water in San Diego County, leaving agencies responsible for paying higher-than-market prices for water.

Feinstein's bill also proposes modifications to management of water exports that could further endanger fish and the ecosystem in the San Francisco Bay Delta.

Statement from Kathryn Phillips, Director of Sierra Club California:

“Again, Senator Feinstein's legislative effort to address California's drought is a mixed bag of good and bad—not just good and not-so-good.

“California needs fresh thinking to help pull us out of this drought. This bill is still too reliant on old ideas that simply continue an unsustainable water system.”

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Sierra Club California is the legislative and regulatory advocacy arm of the 13 Sierra Club chapters in California, representing more than 380,000 members and supporters statewide.