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## House bill addresses water infrastructure and drought mitigation in California and the West

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On June 25, Representative David Valadao (R-CA) introduced H.R. 2898, entitled the “Western Water and American Food Security Act,” in an effort to mitigate the impacts of the drought in California and other Western states. The bill would work on improving water infrastructure in California as well as streamlining the permitting process for water projects across the West. In California, the bill would focus on increasing water storage in reservoirs in Southern California and ensures that water transfers from the northern half of the state are sufficient for Los Angeles and the agricultural communities of the Central Valley. The bill would also amend the formulas used to calculate water needs for endangered fish populations to allow more water usage for humans, a measure Democrats oppose due to its environmental impact.

Across the West, the bill would make the review and permitting process for water projects more efficient, and one measure would allow irrigators to prepay any debts incurred from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), generating \$650 million for a broader BLM water package for the West.

A similar bill proposed by Valadao failed to pass Congress last year due to Democratic opposition to its impact on the environment, but Valadao’s office stated this bill was specifically designed to receive support from both sides of the aisle, citing support from Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) in the upper house.

Sources: E&E News

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