

## California senators unveil drought relief bill

July 29, 2015

Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) unveiled a bill on July 29 to help mitigate the drought that is tearing through the state. Their solution involves transferring water from the San Joaquin Valley to central and southern California for agricultural relief. This bill represents the second effort headed by Sen. Boxer to pass drought relief legislation. Last year, Sens. Boxer and Feinstein attempted to push drought legislation through Congress, ultimately splitting over the issue of endangered species protections. The new bill complies with the Endangered Species Act and biological opinions, a measure designed to garner support in the House of Representatives.

This bill is estimated to cost \$1.3 billion over the next 10 years. The specificity of the bill's language, along with its cost, points to an uphill battle for this standalone legislation to pass Congress. For that reason, the California senators seek to bundle the bill into Senator Lisa Murkowski's (R-AK) water legislation that is contained within her energy package. Murkowski's legislation touches on energy elements from hydropower, to critical minerals, to grid reliability.

Sources: E&E News, Fish and Wildlife Service, House.gov

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