

Opinion: Obama should confront GOP on water

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Unusual, to be sure. But ever so necessary. Former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt took off the gloves and aimed a one-two combo at House Republicans and President Barack Obama on environmental issues.

Babbitt's well-rounded attack last week was richly deserved. Others should follow his example. It is time for a parade of people to stand up publicly in defense of the nation's public lands and water resources.

House Republicans, Babbitt noted, have "declared war on our land, water and natural resources."

This description is no exaggeration, as seen in the words and actions of the California House delegation, who are leaders of the extremist anti-environmental charge.

The troika of Reps. Devin Nunes of Visalia, Kevin McCarthy of Bakersfield and Jeff Denham of Atwater are sponsoring a bill, House Resolution 1837, that would radically alter water law and policy in California and upend years of progress in resolving California's water wars.

HR 1837 would explicitly repeal the two-decades-in-the-making settlement among various interests to restore fisheries and flows to the dewatered San Joaquin River. The bill also would undermine the historic bipartisan legislation in 2009 to find solutions for the Bay-Delta.

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