

Opinion: Federal water act makes sense

By Kevin McCarthy, Devin Nunes and Jeff Denham

The man-made drought in California is no secret. Burdensome environmental regulations restricting water pumping in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta have contributed to hundreds of thousands of acres of fertile farmland going fallow in recent years.

During California's 2007-2009 drought, the Democratic majority and the Obama administration stood on the sidelines while farmers were forced to forgo planting, joblessness rose and families stood in food lines. It was a huge relief last year when we had abundant rain and snow, but instead of using 100 percent of that water for farming and storage, millions of acre-feet of water were allowed to be lost into the ocean.

This year is looking to be as dry as they come, and without adequate storage, we will continue to see the problem of water shortages year after year. We must act now to ensure that our communities get every drop of water possible to grow the crops that feed America and create the jobs that support families and local economies.

The U.S. House of Representatives did just that on Feb. 29 by passing the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley Water Reliability Act. If enacted, this bill will get water flowing in California and increase water storage for future years. Right now, water traveling through the delta has been reduced from a gush to a trickle because environmentalists care more about protecting fish than putting Californians back to work. Protecting ecosystems is important, but so are the crops that help feed America and produce jobs that promote economic recovery in our state. This bill takes the zealotry out of

these environmental restrictions and puts California's water delivery system on more balanced and reliable footing.

Reps. Kevin McCarthy, R-Bakersfield; Devin Nunes, R-Tulare; and Jeff Denham, R-Merced, represent the Central Valley in the U.S. House of Representatives.

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