

Tensions rise over who gets Calif. water



Snowmelt and rain water issues are beginning to boil into political controversy in California. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

By Ryan Sabalow and Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

With prolonged and steady rain falling on Northern California for the first time in weeks, tensions are rising over how to manage the stormwater flows now streaming through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Saying too much water is flowing out to sea, U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein on Friday called on operators of the federal and state water projects to pump more water south through the Delta to drought-stricken farms and cities in Central and Southern California.

Federal regulators painted a starkly different scenario, saying they are shipping as much water south as legally allowed under the environmental restrictions imposed by the Endangered Species Act. Fisheries officials cited recent surveys showing that smelt and the winter-run Chinook salmon are on the brink of extinction.

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