

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2086

To direct the Secretary of Commerce, with the Oakdale Irrigation District and the South San Joaquin Irrigation District, California, to develop and conduct a pilot program to remove nonnative predator fishes from the Stanislaus River, California, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 29, 2015

Mr. DENHAM (for himself, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. NUNES, and Mr. COSTA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Commerce, with the Oakdale Irrigation District and the South San Joaquin Irrigation District, California, to develop and conduct a pilot program to remove nonnative predator fishes from the Stanislaus River, California, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. PILOT PROGRAM TO PROTECT NATIVE ANAD-**
4 **ROMOUS FISH IN THE STANISLAUS RIVER,**
5 **CALIFORNIA.**

6 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF NONNATIVE PREDATOR
7 FISH REMOVAL PILOT PROGRAM.—The Secretary of

1 Commerce and the districts, in consultation with the
2 United States Fish and Wildlife Service, shall jointly de-
3 velop and conduct a nonnative predator fish removal pilot
4 program to remove nonnative striped bass, smallmouth
5 bass, largemouth bass, black bass, and other nonnative
6 predator fishes from the Stanislaus River, California. The
7 pilot program shall—

8 (1) be scientifically based;

9 (2) include methods to quantify the number and
10 size of predator fishes removed each year, the im-
11 pact of such removal on the overall abundance of
12 predator fishes, and the impact of such removal on
13 the populations of juvenile anadromous fish found in
14 the Stanislaus River by, among other things, evalu-
15 ating the number of juvenile anadromous fish that
16 migrate past the rotary screw trap located at
17 Caswell;

18 (3) among other methods, use wire fyke trap-
19 ping, portable resistance board weirs, and boat
20 electrofishing;

21 (4) be developed, including the application for
22 all necessary scientific research and species enhance-
23 ment permits under section 10(a)(1) of the Endan-
24 gered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1539(a)(1))
25 for the performance of the pilot program, not later

1 than 6 months after the date of the enactment of
2 this Act;

3 (5) be implemented as quickly as possible fol-
4 lowing the issuance of all necessary scientific re-
5 search and species enhancement permits needed to
6 begin the pilot program; and

7 (6) be implemented for a period of 7 consecu-
8 tive calendar years.

9 (b) MANAGEMENT.—The management of the pilot
10 program shall be the joint responsibility of the Secretary
11 and the districts. Such parties shall work collaboratively
12 to ensure the performance of the pilot program, and shall
13 discuss and agree upon, among other things, changes in
14 the structure, management, personnel, techniques, strat-
15 egy, data collection, reporting, and conduct of the pilot
16 program.

17 (c) CONDUCT.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—By agreement between the
19 Secretary and the districts, the pilot program may
20 be conducted by their own personnel, qualified pri-
21 vate contractors hired by the districts, personnel of,
22 on loan to, or otherwise assigned to the National
23 Marine Fisheries Service, or a combination thereof.

24 (2) PARTICIPATION BY THE NATIONAL MARINE
25 FISHERIES SERVICE.—If the districts elect to con-

1 duct the program using their own personnel or quali-
2 fied private contractors hired by them in accordance
3 with paragraph (1), the Secretary may assign an
4 employee of, on loan to, or otherwise assigned to the
5 National Marine Fisheries Service, to be present for
6 all activities performed in the field. Such presence
7 shall ensure compliance with the agreed-upon ele-
8 ments specified in subsection (b). The districts shall
9 pay the cost of such participation in accordance with
10 subsection (d).

11 (3) TIMING OF ELECTION.—The districts shall
12 notify the Secretary of their election on or before
13 October 15 of each calendar year of the pilot pro-
14 gram. Such an election shall apply to the work per-
15 formed in the subsequent calendar year.

16 (d) FUNDING.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The districts shall be re-
18 sponsible for 100 percent of the cost of the pilot pro-
19 gram.

20 (2) CONTRIBUTED FUNDS.—The Secretary may
21 accept and use contributions of funds from the dis-
22 tricts to carry out activities under the pilot program.

23 (3) ESTIMATION OF COST.—On or before De-
24 cember 1 of each year of the pilot program, the Sec-
25 retary shall submit to the districts an estimate of

1 the cost to be incurred by the National Marine Fish-
2 eries Service for the pilot program in the following
3 calendar year, if any, including the cost of any data
4 collection and posting under subsection (e). If an
5 amount equal to the estimate is not provided
6 through contributions pursuant to paragraph (2) be-
7 fore December 31 of that year—

8 (A) the Secretary shall have no obligation
9 to conduct the pilot program activities other-
10 wise scheduled for such following calendar year
11 until such amount is contributed by the dis-
12 tricts; and

13 (B) the districts may not conduct any as-
14 pect of the pilot program until such amount is
15 contributed by the districts.

16 (4) ACCOUNTING.—On or before September 1
17 of each year, the Secretary shall provide to the dis-
18 tricts an accounting of the costs incurred by the Sec-
19 retary for the pilot program in the preceding cal-
20 endar year. If the amount contributed by the dis-
21 tricts pursuant to paragraph (2) for that year was
22 greater than the costs incurred by the Secretary, the
23 Secretary shall—

24 (A) apply the excess contributions to costs
25 of activities to be performed by the Secretary

1 under the pilot program, if any, in the next cal-
2 endar year; or

3 (B) if no such activities are to be per-
4 formed, repay the excess contribution to the
5 districts.

6 (e) REPORTING AND EVALUATION.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—On or before the 15th day
8 of each month, the Secretary shall post on the Inter-
9 net website of the National Marine Fisheries Service
10 a tabular summary of the raw data collected under
11 the pilot program in the preceding month.

12 (2) REPORT.—On or before June 30 of the year
13 following the completion of the pilot program, the
14 Secretary and the districts shall jointly submit for
15 peer review a report that—

16 (A) discusses the findings and conclusions
17 of the pilot program;

18 (B) synthesizes the data collected under
19 paragraph (1); and

20 (C) makes recommendations for further
21 study and action.

22 (f) PERMITS PROCESS.—

23 (1) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 180 days
24 after the filing by the Secretary and the districts of
25 an application for scientific research and species en-

1 hancement permits under section 10(a)(1) of the
2 Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C.
3 1539(a)(1)) for the pilot program, the Secretary of
4 the Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, or both, as
5 appropriate, shall issue to the National Marine Fish-
6 eries Service and the districts all such permits that
7 are necessary for the performance of the pilot pro-
8 gram. Each such permit shall authorize activities
9 under the permits to be carried out by the districts
10 and by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

11 (2) DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY.—The dis-
12 tricts and the Secretary may delegate the authority
13 to conduct activities under such permits to any
14 qualified private contractor retained in accordance
15 with subsection (c).

16 (3) FAILURE TO ISSUE PERMITS.—The pilot
17 program, including amendments thereto by the ap-
18 propriate Federal agencies, shall constitute a con-
19 servation plan that complies with section 10(a)(2) of
20 the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C.
21 1539(a)(2)) if the Secretaries have not carried out
22 paragraph (1) within 270 days after the filling of an
23 application in accordance with such paragraph.

24 (4) TREATMENT OF STRIPED BASS.—For pur-
25 poses of the application of the Central Valley Project

Improvement Act (title III of Public Law 102–575) with respect to the pilot program, striped bass shall not be treated as anadromous fish.

(g) NEPA.—

(1) LIMITATION ON APPLICATION.—If the Secretaries have not carried out subsection (f)(1) within 365 days after the filing by the Secretary of Commerce and the districts of an application referred to in that subsection, section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)) shall not apply with respect to this section and the issuance of any permit under this section, during the 7-year period beginning on the date of the submission of such application.

(2) EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS.—The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce shall consult with the Council on Environmental Quality in accordance with section 1506.11 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (including successor regulations) to develop alternative arrangements to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), as necessary to expedite the benefits of the pilot program for the conservation of threatened species and endangered species.

1 (h) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this section:

2 (1) DISTRICTS.—The term “districts” means
3 the Oakdale Irrigation District and the South San
4 Joaquin Irrigation District, California.

5 (2) PILOT PROGRAM.—The term “pilot pro-
6 gram” means the nonnative predator fish removal
7 pilot program established under this section.

8 (3) SECRETARY OF COMMERCE.—The term
9 “Secretary of Commerce” means the Secretary of
10 Commerce acting through the National Marine Fish-
11 eries Service.

12 (i) STATE LAW PREEMPTED.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—Any restriction imposed
14 under California law on the catch, take, or harvest
15 of any nonnative or introduced aquatic or terrestrial
16 species that preys upon anadromous fish and that
17 occupies or is found in the Stanislaus River, or the
18 permitting thereof, is hereby void and is preempted.

19 (2) STATE PERMITS NOT REQUIRED.—Neither
20 the districts nor the Secretaries are required to ob-
21 tain a Scientific Collection Permit or any other per-
22 mit or authorization from the California Department
23 of Fish and Wildlife or any other division or instru-
24 mentality of the State of California pursuant to sec-
25 tion 1002(a) of the California Fish and Game Code,

1 section 5514(a) of the California Fish and Game
2 Code, section 650 or title 14 of the California Code
3 of Regulations, or any other provision of California
4 law to implement any aspect of the pilot program.

5 (j) SUNSET.—The authorities provided under this
6 section shall expire 7 years after date of the issuance of
7 the permits referred to in subsection (f)(1).

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