

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT
ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

The Legislative Committee (LC) met on Friday, November 13, 2015. The meeting was attended by committee members Ms. Dorothy Lowman, Mr. David Crabbe, Mr. Dan Wolford, Mr. Buzz Brizendine, Mr. Rich Lincoln, and Mr. Dave Hansen; Council staff Ms. Jennifer Gilden, Mr. Mike Burner, Mr. Don Hanson; and Mr. Phil Anderson.

The LC first heard a staff review of recent Federal legislation (Agenda Item F.2, Attachment 1).

The West Coast Dungeness Crab Management Act (HR 2168) passed the House on October 6. The bill is scheduled for markup on November 18. In addition, the Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Act (HR 774) was signed into law on November 5. And in California, the Pacific to Plate Act, which makes it easier for fishermen to sell fish at farmers' markets and other public markets, was signed into law.

The LC discussed the Congressional request for comment on the three California drought bills: the Western Water and American Food Security Act (HR 2898, Valadao); the California Emergency Drought Relief Act (S 1894, Boxer and Feinstein); and the Drought Recovery and Resilience Act of 2015 (HR 2983, Huffman, and S 1837, Boxer). None of these individual bills have moved forward since September; however, a hearing was held on the bills on October 8, and Senator Lisa Murkowski in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee is working toward developing comprehensive legislation on West Coast water issues.

The Council sent a letter on Sept. 28 with a preliminary response to the request; a draft letter with additional analysis is attached (Agenda item F.2, Supplemental Attachment 2). The LC suggested the following minor editorial changes and recommends unanimously that the Council adopt the letter:

1. Add more detail to impacts in Section 308.
2. Sec 610 – This section redefines “anadromous fish” under the CVPIA to restrict the definition to only native stocks of salmon (including steelhead) and sturgeon that were present in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers as of October 30, 1992. Add more details about concerns regarding this date. The Friant dam, completed in 1943, completely blocks passage for anadromous fish. There were once plans to remove the dam and restore anadromous runs in the river, but they have not proceeded. Redefining anadromous fish using this definition would preclude any stocks present before the dam was put in place.
3. In paragraph beginning “measures such as these,” replace the word “sustain” with “improve.”
4. In Section 313, fix “diverts” typo.
5. In Section 604, clarify language regarding penalizing Bureau of Reclamation.
6. In third paragraph from the end, replace “sidelining” with a different word.

Given these edits, there was unanimous support for the letter, and the LC recommends the Council approve it.

Future Meetings

The LC proposes to meet in conjunction with the March Council meeting.

PFMC
11/14/15