



COALITION FOR A SUSTAINABLE DELTA

SOLVING THE SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA CRISIS

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Statement Regarding Predation Issues

SACRAMENTO, CALIF. – A broad statewide coalition of business, farming, and water users withdrew their petition to the California Fish and Game Commission to address predation of endangered salmon and smelt by non-native predator species by increasing bag limits and decreasing size limits on striped bass and black bass in the Delta. In recent days, Commission staff recommended maintenance of the status quo rather than taking any action in response to the petition to address this important issue despite continuing reports showing declines in native endangered species.

The petitioners included: Coalition for a Sustainable Delta, California Chamber of Commerce, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, San Joaquin Tributaries Authority, Southern California Water Committee, State Water Contractors, Western Growers Association, California Farm Bureau Federation, Northern California Water Association, and Kern County Water Agency.

“California families, businesses and farms have sacrificed considerably during this drought to provide water to help preserve salmon and smelt. Addressing predation by striped bass and black bass is an important next step to better protect and begin restoring these endangered species.” Coalition for a Sustainable Delta spokesperson Michael Boccadoro stated, “It is clear that more needs to be done to halt the continuing declines, but the Commission has again refused to address the issue. We are not giving up but simply refocusing our efforts.”

Predation of endangered and threatened fish, including Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon, Central Valley steelhead, delta smelt, and Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon, by non-native striped bass and black bass is well documented. Recent reports by state and federal fish agencies indicate that bass are voracious predators and consume an enormous volume of fish, including listed species. Predation ranks among the top stressors for Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon, Central Valley steelhead, and Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon in threat assessments by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

“We will be pursuing all available avenues to ensure this issue is addressed. As native, at-risk species continue to decline, the state is running out of time to improve salmon, smelt, and steelhead populations. This petition was a measured first step to begin reasonably and effectively identifying ways to limit predation. We look forward to continuing to work with the Commission, the Department and other state agencies to ensure recovery of endangered species,” Boccadoro concluded.

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