



April 9, 2026

The Honorable Assemblymember Papan, Chair  
California Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife  
1020 N Street, Suite 160  
Sacramento, CA 95814

*Sent via email*

**RE: AB 2215 - State Water Project Water Rights Permit - OPPOSE**

Dear Chair Papan and Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee Members,

The undersigned organizations write in opposition to AB 2215, which seeks to extend the Department of Water Resources (“the Department”) water rights permit for the State Water Project (“SWP”) until 2085. This bill oversteps existing regulatory processes through the State Water Resources Control Board (“the Water Board”), designed to oversee permit extension requests including for the SWP.

Under current responsibilities delegated by the state legislature, the Water Board both issues and manages California water rights. This includes an established process for water rights holders to request extensions to their water rights permits. The Department followed this process, filing a request for extension of time

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for their SWP permits on January 21, 2025.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, the Department has also filed their notice of preparation of the associated environmental impact report in September of 2025.<sup>2</sup> The attempt to validate permits through the legislature undermines the existing proceeding, which importantly allows for a greater level of transparency and public participation.

AB 2215 gives preferential treatment to the State Water Contractors (“SWC”), and would set a bad precedent for water rights permits going forward. All water rights holders should be held to the same standards.

Extension of the SWP water rights permit would also have direct implications for the controversial Delta Conveyance Project (“DCP”). Despite the explicit statement that this bill will not be construed as an approval of the DCP, the extension is a necessary requirement for the Department and SWCs to pursue and execute construction projects - like the DCP - connected to the perfecting of the SWP water rights permit. The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is a fragile, declining ecosystem already under significant stress from water exports and a changing climate. Bypassing regulatory oversight and processes to enable the pursuit of these controversial projects threatens to further exacerbate the system declines.

In this era of aggressive deregulation, we think it’s important to support the Water Board’s work in upholding established systems and laws set forth regarding the administration of water rights. For these reasons, we encourage the legislature to oppose AB 2215, and instead allow the process before the Water Board to proceed.

Sincerely,

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Restore the Delta

Christie Ralston  
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Chris Shutes  
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<sup>1</sup> Department of Water Resources, *Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report and Scoping Meeting for the Petition Requesting an Extension of Time to More Fully Exercise Conditional Water Rights for Operation of the State Water Project*, September 30, 2025. <https://mavensnotebook.com/2025/01/23/news-dwr-submits-petition-to-extend-water-rights-permit/>

<sup>2</sup> Dep’t of Water Resources, *NEWS: DWR submits petition to extend water rights permit*, Maven’s Notebook, January 23, 2025. <https://mavensnotebook.com/2025/10/01/notice-of-preparation-of-an-eir-for-the-petition-requesting-an-extension-of-time-to-more-fully-exercise-conditional-water-rights-for-operation-of-the-state-water-project/>

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