



AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®

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March 13, 2014

The Honorable _____
United States House of Representatives
____ House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative _____:

Today, the House of representatives is scheduled to take up for consideration H.R. 3189, the Water Rights Protection Act. American Farm Bureau strongly supports the Manager's Amendment to the legislation. This amendment sets out in clear, explicit language that the bill will not impede any existing authorities, including those set out in the Endangered Species Act or the Federal Power Act. Moreover, it assures that it will have no impact on Bureau of Reclamation contracts. Thus, the Manager's amendment addresses in unambiguous language issues raised during committee markup of the bill and put to rest any lingering possibility that such authorities would be affected.

Additionally, American Farm Bureau strongly opposes the Polis amendment to the legislation. Although an original cosponsor of the legislation, Rep. Polis has withdrawn his support from the bill if his amendment should be rejected. It does not achieve the original intent of the legislation, which is to assure that existing state and federal law are respected. Instead, the Polis proposal would treat owners of state water rights in an unequal, unprecedented fashion. It would carve out certain protections for one class of user while explicitly excluding others – even though the second group has an equally legitimate right to protection under the law. There is no sound basis for supporting such an approach, and we urge all members to vote against this harmful amendment.

H.R. 3189 is an important bill that protects the rights of federal agencies and all federal permit holders by reaffirming decades of federal and state law. We urge all members to vote in favor of the Manager's amendment and final passage of the bill.

Sincerely,

Bob Stallman
President