

Dear Governor Brown,

The Society for Conservation Biology (Davis Chapter) urges you to continue your commitment to conservation of California's wildlife and natural resources, even in this time of crisis. Your suspension of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for changes in water management during the drought emergency is disturbing. It leaves the door open to water management that may harm California's native fishes and other wildlife that depend on our dwindling supply of water. While we understand a lengthy environmental review process may delay needed action in an emergency, we recommend managers still consider impacts on the environment before changing water management, and we recommend mitigation be identified and put in place as soon as reasonably possible.

California is home to 129 native fishes, 25% percentage of which are threatened or endangered¹. California is also home to a world hotspot of endemic plants² dependent on our Mediterranean climate and the winter rains we have not had this year. We applaud your inclusion of sections 14, 15, and 16 of last week's drought emergency³ declaration, which detail actions state agencies must make to conserve our natural environment during the emergency. We ask that these provisions will be given as much priority and funding as measures enacted for human wellbeing. The human residents of this state have the option of leaving for wetter climates or buying bottled water, but when rivers go dry the native fish have no where to go. Any people forced to leave by the drought can move back when the rains return, but once a native species goes extinct it cannot be brought back.

To reiterate, do not let the humanitarian emergency brought on by the drought let the State of California neglect the environmental emergency occurring at the same time. Both can and should receive the attention and full commitment of your administration.

Sincerely,

The Society for Conservation Biology (Davis Chapter)

This letter has been approved by the North American Section Policy Committee of the global Society for Conservation Biology

¹ Moyle, P. B., Katz, J. V., & Quiñones, R. M. (2011). Rapid decline of California's native inland fishes: a status assessment. *Biological Conservation*, 144(10), 2414-2423.

² Myers N, Mittermeier RA, Mittermeier CG, Da Fonseca GAB, Kent J (1999) Biodiversity hotspots for conservation priorities. *Nature*, 403, 853–858.

³ Brown. <http://gov.ca.gov/news.php?id=18368>