

DOUG LAMALFA

1ST DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0501

June 22, 2018

Ms. Karla Nemeth, Director
California Department of Water Resources
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1115-1
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

Re: Lake Oroville Community Update dated 06-22-18

Dear Ms. Nemeth:

The three of us write to you in response to the "Lake Oroville Community Update" issued by your department today regarding your announcement that you are releasing water from Lake Oroville right before the height of a recreational Holiday week in order to meet an arbitrary construction deadline of November 1, 2018. Just yesterday, during your department's 10:00 am Cooperator's meeting, your staff reported the good news the current lake level was 812 feet and it was expected to remain above 805 feet for the duration of the 4th of July Holiday recreating week. We had already begun to message our constituents spreading this positive information. Then, just hours later, your department staff notifies our offices this isn't the case and in fact it is quite the reverse.

As you are well aware, once the lake levels fall below the 805 foot mark the number of available boat launch ramps decreases significantly. The primary launch facility at the lake, the Spillway, is still out of commission due to construction. This is the second recreating season the public is coping with this inconvenience and economic disruption.

We have repeatedly addressed this issue with you independently and collectively since this disaster ensued. That is why it is imperative water use for recreational purposes be a key component in your decision making process when it comes to lake operating levels. If you reach the 808 foot lake level early the week of June 25th, 2018 as currently planned, the lake level will be well below 805 foot mark by the time the Holiday week commences. This is once again a travesty for the local community and region at large. With the loss of available launch ramps, the boating experience will be hampered for those who still plan to come and it will most certainly deter people from coming at all now or in the future.

As we have recurrently mentioned, if people have a negative experience because of the consistently low lake levels and problems with accessibility then they will choose to recreate at another lake. This will turn this temporary situation into a permanent problem.

The referenced community update states this action to release water is warranted because Kiewit requires a second point of access to the upper chute through the radial gates. We understand Kiewit wants to keep moving forward in order to meet their contractual obligation of completion of construction by no later than November 1, 2018. We are concerned a date in time is predicated this decision. In light of that, we pose the following questions:

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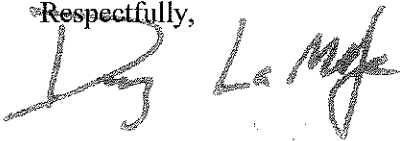
<http://lamalfa.house.gov>

1. Is this deadline the only factor driving the decision to increase the outflows right before this big recreation week risking an adverse economic occurrence?
2. Exactly how many days of delay would there be if the lake levels weren't allowed to go below 805 feet until after July 8th?
3. Has there been a sufficient cost/benefit analysis done taking into consideration the economic implications?

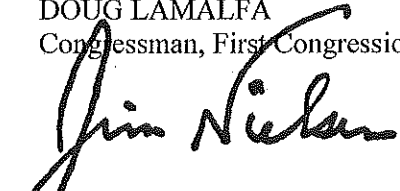
Time is of the essence as water is being wasted as it travels south of the dam without a specified demand or purpose. We urge you to answer our questions as soon as possible and take corrective action as deemed necessary in light of all of the contributing factors.

If you have any further questions, please direct them directly to one of us or one of our staff.

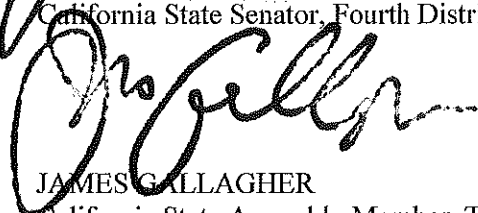
Respectfully,



DOUG LAMALFA
Congressman, First Congressional District



JIM NIELSEN
California State Senator, Fourth District



JAMES GALLAGHER
California State Assembly Member, Third District

cc: Mr. Kevin McIntyre
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Chairman