

**Association of California Water Agencies**Leadership Advocacy Information *Since 1910*

April 14, 2003

The Honorable Greg Walden
U.S. House of Representatives
1404 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: ACWA Support for HR 1662 / Via Facsimilie

Dear Representative Walden,

The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) would like to thank you for your efforts to improve the Endangered Species Act, and hereby offers its support for your HR 1662. ACWA's 440 public water agency members are collectively responsible for over 90% of the water delivered in the state for residential and agricultural uses.

For several years ACWA has worked to advance common-sensed reforms to the ESA. Whether through comprehensive changes to the entire act, or in the targeted area of requiring improved, sound science, it is clear that the ESA warrants improvements in any of several areas.

As you may know, California leads the nation in the number of threatened or endangered plants, animals and insects within its borders. High profile ESA disputes have spilled into the courts over science used in the Klamath Basin, the Central Valley and across the state. Fortunately, California has found encouraging success in complying with the ESA through new approaches to regulatory requirements on water users, particularly through the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. Under CALFED, restoration activities and agreements between local, state and federal agencies have brought fish species closer to recovery, and greatly increased the flexibility to operate our state's water supply system.

Nevertheless, ESA conflicts loom over much of the arid west, particularly in times of drought. ACWA is hopeful that the Act can be amended to accommodate the improved science and infrastructure of the 21st century, for the benefit of both humankind and the species it is meant to protect.

Your legislation is an important, bipartisan step in this direction. Please contact our office at 202.434.4760 if we may be of additional assistance with the passage of HR 1662.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David L. Reynolds'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David L. Reynolds
Director of Federal Relations

Cc National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition