

Monthly Briefing

A Summary of the Alliance's Recent and Upcoming Activities and Important Water News

The 'New' Clean Water Act

Hearing On Controversial Bill Draws A Crowd to D.C.

Hearing Topic Is Alliance Priority

Authored by Congressman James Oberstar (MINNESOTA), the proposed Clean Water Recovery Act (CWRA) would redefine the Clean Water Act term "waters of the United States."

Senator Russ Feingold (WISCONSIN) and others have introduced companion legislation in the Senate.

According to the bill, waters would include wetlands, intermittent streams, prairie potholes, sloughs, meadows, playa lakes, mudflats, sandflats, natural ponds and more. The bill also applies to "activities affecting these waters."

(Continued on Page 2)

Legislation opposed by many Western agricultural groups was the subject of a legislative hearing before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee earlier this month. A week earlier, the Clean Water Recovery Act (CWRA) was the topic of a hearing held by the Senate Energy, Power and Water Subcommittee on April 9.

SEVERAL FAMILY FARM Alliance Advisory Committee members were in attendance at the House committee hearing, which also saw a good turnout from Committee members.

"The committee chambers were jammed, and an overflow room was used to accommodate a very large audience," said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen (OREGON), who also attended the hearing.

The hearing featured 23 witnesses and lasted 12 hours. The Committee received testimony from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's



James Oberstar:
Bill's author.

(Continued on Page 2)

Monthly Briefing's Inside Stories For April

- Aging Water Infrastructure Is Focus, *Pages 3-5*
- Reclamation Plans Canal Workshop, *Page 4*
- Wrapping Up Reclamation's M4E, *Pages 6-8*
- Hearing Held On Indian Water Rights, *Page 8*
- Columbia River Fish Pacts Proposed, *Pages 9-10*
- Water 2025 Applications Are Sought, *Page 10*
- California Pays Fish-Saving Price, *Page 11*
- Senate OK's Site Security Cap, *Page 12*

CWRA: Chairman Oberstar Says He's 'Willing To Work' On Bill

(Continued from Page 1)

Natural Resources Conservation Service, representatives of state and local governments, environmental, agricultural, and industry interests, legal practitioners, and other stakeholders on the CWRA.

(To review all written testimony, go to <http://transportation.house.gov/hearings/hearingDetail.aspx?NewsID=486>.)

Democrat and Republican leaders of the committee debated for some time before the first witness panel testified, and it became apparent that Chairman James Oberstar (MINNESOTA) – who helped craft the original Clean Water Act (CWA) over 30 years ago – was conciliatory toward critics of the bill.

MR. OBERSTAR and other proponents of this legislation contend that it is necessary to restore the comprehensive protections provided by the Clean Water Act in meeting its goals of “fishable and swimmable waters,” and to restore the “regulatory certainty” that existed prior to controversial court decisions (*SWANCC* and *Rapanos*).

At the hearing, Mr. Oberstar downplayed the criticism of the bill and the “alarmist” statements made by some opponents. He concluded his opening statement by saying he was willing to work with all interested parties on ways to improve the legislation. “I invite all constructive proposals and remain open to adaptations to this bill,” Chairman Oberstar said, adding that the bill “is a starting point for discussions.”

CRITICS OF THE BILL are concerned that it

will actually greatly expand the federal regulatory jurisdiction of the CWA.

Committee ranking Republican John Mica (FLORIDA) provided a dramatic sense of the degree of opposition to this bill, by placing a two-foot stack of opposition letters on the dais, and pointing to three giant placards that showed the 300 organizations opposed to CWRA.

Congressman John T. Salazar (COLORADO) and others urged their committee colleagues to take a long look at the impacts of the legislation before moving forward.

Rep. Salazar’s principal concerns have been over land and water rights, an expanded definition of waters of the United States, and the fact the government would gain the power to regulate any body of water, including wet meadows, stock ponds, and irrigation ditches. In the end, Mr. Oberstar apparently agreed to slow down efforts to move CWRA. According to Rep. Salazar, the Chairman conceded during the proceedings that his bill would indeed expand federal jurisdiction.

To date, a committee vote (“markup”) has not been scheduled for Mr. Oberstar’s bill or its Senate counterpart. “House staff believes the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee may hold a markup sometime in May,” said Joe Raeder, the Alliance’s Washington representative.

Hearing: Alliance Lines Up Opposed To Clean Water Bill

(Continued from Page 1)

Fighting this bill was identified as a top priority by the Alliance Board of Directors at its Annual Meeting and Conference two months ago.

“We have worked to convey that message in many forums in the past year,” said Mr. Keppen.

THE ALLIANCE and National Water Resources Association (NWRA) have submitted written testimony to Congressional committees in opposition of this legislation.

Alliance Advisory Committee Member Norm Semanko (IDAHO)

also testified before two congressional hearings last summer on behalf of the Alliance and NWRA, opposing the legislation.

THERE ARE several other opposition efforts to CWRA under way.

(Continued on Page 3)

Aging Water Infrastructure Draws Attention Of Senate, Administration

The last-minute appearance of the U.S. Senate Majority Leader at an oversight hearing on Bureau of Reclamation infrastructure and the recent collapse of an irrigation canal in Nevada are helping to underscore the looming risks of aging Western water infrastructure.



Senator Harry Reid

An oversight hearing was held April 17 before the Senate Subcommittee on Water and Power to receive testimony on the increasing number of issues associated with aging water resource infrastructure that is operated and maintained, or owned, by the Bureau of Reclamation.

HOWEVER, it also provided a forum for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (NEVADA) and a member of the Subcommittee to highlight related, newly-introduced legislation.

Hearing: CWRA Effort Slowed

(Continued from Page 2)

David Ridenour, Vice President of The National Center for Public Policy Research, is working with the American Property Coalition in St. Paul (MINNESOTA) to spearhead one effort, which culminated in a letter to Congress signed on by over 130 organizations. The Alliance also was included in a letter sent out prior to the two hearings earlier this month.

WHILE THE New York *Times* earlier this month urged that Congress approve CWRA, the Center commissioned a poll on CWRA showing that 54% of Americans oppose the measure.

The poll questions are available online at http://www.nationalcenter.org/NCPPR_Clean_Water_Poll_Questions_0208.pdf.



A newer Prairie Street home was among the hardest-hit properties during the January 5 flood in Fernley.

A rather typical Congressional committee oversight hearing was livened up when Senator Reid made a guest appearance before the Subcommittee.

Senator Reid used the occasion to draw attention to a bill he recently introduced, designed to make aging federal-owned canals and levees safer across the West.

THE ISSUE WAS FURTHER addressed by Mayor Todd Cutler of Fernley (NEVADA), one of the panel's witnesses. He spoke about the failure of an earthen embankment on a century-old irrigation canal that flooded his town January 5. The breach of the Truckee Canal flooded nearly 600 homes, making Fernley a state and federal disaster area.

"Water is a destroyer," Senator Reid said. "It is so powerful."

Engineers who investigated the Fernley flood concluded the main reason of the failure was the embankment had been compromised by burrowing rodents. Mr. Reid's bill would provide \$11 million over the next five years for required inspections of federal infrastructure such as the Truckee Canal.

(Continued on Page 4)

Reclamation Plans Canal Workshop

The Bush Administration is placing more emphasis on aging water infrastructure matters. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has planned a “Canal/Asset” management meeting on May 14 at the Federal Center in Denver (COLORADO).

The daylong meeting will feature opening comments by Commissioner Robert Johnson, a summary of the recent Truckee Canal failure in Nevada, assessments of canals through urbanized areas, and a

tour of Reclamation’s hydraulic laboratories.

Throughout Reclamation’s history, canals have been constructed in the West to deliver project benefits.

WHEN THESE CANALS were constructed, they were located generally in rural areas, where the major impact of canal failure was the loss of project benefits.

However, with increased urbanization occurring on lands below many canals, loss of life or significant property/

economic damage can now result from failure.

“In light of this increased urbanization, Reclamation is trying to ensure that continuing efforts to assess and monitor the condition of these canals are effective, and that operating entities have emergency response plans in place in the unlikely event of failure,” Commissioner Johnson said in an April 15 statement.

On-line registration at www.usbr.gov/canalsafety for this meeting should be made no later than May 2, 2008.

Infrastructure: Costs From System Aging Are In The Billions

(Continued from Page 3)

It would also direct Interior to perform maintenance and repairs to ensure the safety of nearby homes and businesses. The legislation is being co-sponsored by Democratic Senators Jeff Bingaman (NEW MEXICO), Ken Salazar (COLORADO) and Jon Tester (MONTANA), all three of whom were in attendance.

Reclamation owns 7,911 miles of canals in 17 Western states, the vast majority of which are managed and operated by local irrigation and water districts.

On projects transferred to local control, “in most cases the arrangement calls for those costs to be the responsibility of the water users,” Reclamation Commissioner Robert Johnson testified. Fernley Mayor Cutler said that Reclamation as the owner and the irrigation district as the operator should share repair costs of the levee “with the idea that it provides us life.”

STARTING IN 1902, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation constructed a large majority of the water

infrastructure that now exists in the 17 Western states. Much of this infrastructure is now 50-100 years old, approaching the end of its design life and in need of substantial rehabilitation or replacement.

The Congressional Research Service indicates that the original development cost of this infrastructure was over \$20 billion. Reclamation estimates that the replacement value of its water infrastructure is over \$100 billion.

AFTER SENATOR REID made his statement and departed for other Senate business, a panel of expert witnesses testified to the subcommittee. Appearing with Mayor Cutler and Commissioner Johnson were Major General Charles McGinnis (National Research Council), National Water Resources Association Executive Director Tom Donnelly, Randy Reed of the St. Mary (MONTANA) Facilities Project, and Tony Willardson with Western States Water Council.

(Continued on Page 5)

Water Works: Aging Facilities Take Toll Throughout West

(Continued from Page 4)

Subcommittee members asked many questions and showed interest in the topic at hand.

Senator Larry Craig (IDAHO) talked about the importance of storage, and how Reclamation projects have helped create incredible wealth in the last 100 years. He emphasized the need to leverage government and the private sector to use that wealth to find creative ways to finance water infrastructure repair projects.

“The bias of the new Congress” is not with Western water users when there is \$500 billion budget shortfall, he said.

“Western water infrastructure is worn out,” said Senator Jon Tester (MONTANA), who keyed in on the challenges facing the St. Mary Facilities of the Milk River in his home state.

THAT PARTICULAR project will cost \$130 million to repair, but the relatively small number of

‘Western water infrastructure is worn out’

—Senator Jon Tester

farmers served by the project are unable to pay for those costs, particularly since it is considered to be operations and maintenance work by Reclamation, and must therefore be paid for in one year.

The St. Mary dilemma is one that is seen by the Family Farm Alliance as representing the “poster child” of aging water infrastructure serving a rural Western area.

MR. REED, whose organization is a member of the Family Farm Alliance, told the Subcommittee that the St. Mary project is on the verge of collapse. He also explained that the Milk River project was originally constructed as a single purpose project, with 100% of the costs carried by a small group of



Montana's St. Mary's Diversion Facility.

farmers. Now, that project has many other beneficiaries.

“These are federal assets,” said Mr. Reed. Senator Tester agreed. “If you eat, you truly have a stake in this project,” he said.

U.S. SENATOR John Barrasso (WYOMING) at the hearing laid out a plan to eliminate bureaucratic red tape to facilitate permitting of new water supplies.

The bill would allow states to play a larger role in approving water storage projects. States would be able to challenge burdensome permit conditions imposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“**WYOMING OFTEN** faces a severe water shortage,” Senator Barrasso said. “My bill will give us the tools we need to develop the additional water needed for the future of Wyoming.”

Mr. Barrasso’s “Water Essential Storage To Enhance Regions in Need Act” (WESTERN Act) would provide Wyoming the ability to have a greater say in the development of water resources within the state.

Under the WESTERN Act, a new “Corps of Engineers Board of Appeals” would be created, comprised of five members. The WESTERN Act is co-sponsored by Senator Mike Enzi (WYOMING).



U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

National Water Resources Association Director Tom Donnelly, Salt River Project Associate General Manager John Sullivan and Family Farm Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen join Reclamation's Karl Wirkus, Kris Polly and Roseann Gonzales, along with Interior's Brenda Burman, for a Capitol Hill briefing on Reclamation's Managing for Excellence effort.

Alliance Participates In 'Managing For Excellence' Windup D.C. Briefing

The Bureau of Reclamation's *Managing for Excellence* initiative has concluded, marking a new beginning for the Interior Department agency. The Family Farm Alliance, which has been engaged in this process from the very beginning, was also there at the end.

The Alliance was one of three water and power organizations invited by the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to participate in a joint Washington (D.C.) briefing for Congressional staff, Reclamation stakeholders and customers on April 17.

Managing for Excellence is the Bureau of Reclamation's response to *Managing Construction and Infrastructure in the 21st Century Bureau of Reclamation*, a comprehensive report completed in 2006 by the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Sciences. Executing the action plan is a primary initiative for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation ("Reclamation") this year.

"THIS PROCESS provided an important op-

portunity for western water users to find further ways to improve transparency in Reclamation decision-making, provide improved accountability, and make the organization as efficient as possible," said

'This process provided important opportunities for Western water users to find further ways to improve transparency in Reclamation decision-making...and make the organization as efficient as possible'

—DAN KEPPEEN, *Alliance Executive Director*

Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen (OREGON), who represented the Alliance at the briefing.

Reclamation has set a target completion date of December 2008 for full implementation of *Managing for Excellence* ("M4E") decisions. The documents are the results of an extensive staff effort, coordinated with eight public meetings and workshops between Reclamation and its customers.

(Continued on Page 7)

M4E Highlights And Lingerin g Concerns

The Family Farm Alliance's testimony at the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's final *Managing for Excellence* session identified several noteworthy results that were accomplished in M4E, especially with regard to title and operation and maintenance (O&M) transfers, customer interaction and collaboration, the development of a useful on-line contracting repository, and improved project management and engineering standards.

"It is clear that Reclamation and the Alliance have both benefited from the M4E process," Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen (OREGON) said.

MR. KEPPE N ALSO briefly discussed the concerns some Alliance members continue to have with positions the organization has consistently advocated for in the past three years.

"It remains uncertain how much latitude Reclamation will allow local districts who want to hire their own consultants or staff to undertake engineering and design work," Mr. Keppen said.

He also noted that "right-sizing" of Reclama-

tion's technical staff remains a concern for many water and power customers.

"We would like the opportunity to meet with Reclamation to periodically review how this very complicated issue will be resolved," he said.

"**THE ULTIMATE RESULTS** generated by M4E will depend on directives issued by Reclamation, and, most importantly, how those directives are followed up on to ensure they are complied with," said Alliance Advisory Committee member John Sullivan (ARIZONA), whose comments were echoed by Mr. Keppen.

"We intend to continue to focus priority attention to M4E implementation," he said. "This topic will continue to be one we discuss at national water and power meetings in coming years. We want to see the M4E recommendations properly implemented, and we will be asking for regular status reports on progress made towards that end."

To learn more about *Managing for Excellence* please visit www.usbr.gov/eta.

M4E: Alliance Takes Part In Wrapup Session

(Continued from Page 6)

The final public meeting of *Managing for Excellence* was held on February 29 in Las Vegas, following the Family Farm Alliance Annual Meeting and Conference. As one of Reclamation's largest stakeholders, the Alliance has taken an active role in the process and has participated in all Reclamation public workshops since 2006.

MR. KEPPE N WAS accompanied on the witness panel by Alliance Advisory Committee mem-

ber John Sullivan (ARIZONA) and National Water Resources Associate Executive Vice President Tom Donnelly (VIRGINIA). The meeting was attended by approximately 30 Reclamation officials, Congressional committee staff members, and water, power and environmental organization representatives. It was conducted in the hearing chambers of the House Resources Committee.

(Continued on Page 8)

Oversight Hearing Focuses on Indian Water Settlements

The House Water and Power Subcommittee on April 16 conducted a hearing on Native American water rights settlements, an area of growing importance in the Western water arena. The hearing's purpose was to examine the geographical and fiscal scope of Indian water rights settlements in Congress.

The hearing explored the current interpretation of criteria and procedures for determining the federal financial obligation of each settlement and what water supply certainty can be gained by the resolution of these water claims. The hearing also focused on how federal and non-federal agencies currently negotiate agreements and how the settlement process can be improved.

FAMILY FARM ALLIANCE Advisory Committee member John Sullivan of the Salt River Project (ARIZONA) sat on the first of two witness panels that testified before the subcommittee.

He was joined by Michael Bogert (Chairman of the Working Group on Indian Water Rights, Department of the Interior), Susan Cottingham (MONTANA), on behalf of the Western Governors Association, and John Echohawk (Executive Director, Native American Water Rights Fund). The second panel included representatives from three Western tribes: the Blackfeet, Navajo Nation and Gila River Indian Community.

Mr. Sullivan's testimony outlined his organization's extensive recent experience in water rights settlements with Arizona tribes. He identified several important challenges that need to be given attention:

"THE THEMES OF COLLABORATION and a trustworthy process, and the goals of certainty and a definitive resolution can remain the constant," said Mr. Sullivan. "Involving the members of the federal team, such as Interior's Office of Indian Water Rights, at an early point in the process is essential to favorable outcome."

M4E: Reclamation 'On Right Track'

Continued from Page 7)

The briefing was led by representatives from Reclamation and Department of the Interior Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Brenda Burman. Reclamation leaders summarized implementation of the final *Managing for Excellence* decision documents on topics ranging from major repair challenges to human resources and workforce levels.

The water user organization representatives were all essentially on the same page with their message.

"First, we thanked Reclamation for elevating the need for collaboration with water and power customers," said Keppen after the briefing. "We encouraged Reclamation to continue moving in that direction. Overall, we believe many of our objectives have been met, and that Reclamation is on the right track with this program."

All water user representatives were involved with the development of a closing letter to Reclamation on *Managing for Excellence* that was endorsed by 15 national, regional and local water and power organizations. This letter formed the core of the Alliance presentation at the hearing. A written statement was also transmitted to Reclamation Commissioner Robert Johnson earlier in the week.

Mr. Sullivan also noted that the availability and dedication of Central Arizona Project water was instrumental in several of the more recent Indian water rights settlements in Arizona. "It is important that water providers and the federal government continue to take advantage of opportunities to develop new sources of water and stretch existing supplies," he said. "Without these opportunities, the ability to find water to dedicate to future Indian settlements, without injuring other parties, will become limited."

All the witnesses who testified had some common observations. Notably, the number of Indian settlements underway has grown from two last year to 13 this year. All witnesses stressed that settlement is very lengthy, difficult and expensive.



The Columbia River Gorge, from the Oregon side.

Tribes, Federal Agencies Propose Columbia River Basin Fish Pacts

Four Columbia River Basin tribes and three federal agencies earlier this month announced the start of a public comment period for an unprecedented set of proposed agreements and comprehensive actions designed to improve habitat and strengthen fish stocks in the Columbia River Basin over the next 10 years.

The participants also believe these proposed agreements will fundamentally improve the working relationships between these tribes and the federal government, focusing on common goals and ending decades of litigation.

“The net result of this agreement is that the signatory tribes will not challenge the new biological opinions,” said Norm Semanko, Executive Director of the

Idaho Water Users Association. “That means that the environmental groups will be left largely on their own in any litigation that they want to pursue.”

THE COLUMBIA River Basin agreements build on “biological opinions” for listed salmon and steelhead and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's fish and wildlife program.

(Continued on Page 10)

Columbia River: Broad Agreement Is Reached

(Continued from Page 9)

They provide common goals and priorities for hydro system mitigation; additional hydro, habitat and hatchery actions; greater clarity about biological benefits and secure funding for 10 years.

IN FACT, AS NOAA Fisheries prepares its latest biological opinions for issuance and filing with the U.S. District Court of Oregon on May 5, 2008, these agreements underscore that the new salmon plan is being developed with the highest-ever level of stakeholder collaboration and support.

“Working for the salmon is sacred work,” said Fidelia Andy, chair of the Fish and Wildlife Committee of the Yakama Nation Tribal Council and chairwoman of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

“The agreements will get our governments out of the courtroom and back on the firm ground of mutual goals and collaboration.”

THE AGREEMENTS are the result of two years of extensive negotiations between Indian tribes and the federal agencies.

Under these agreements, the federal agencies would make available approximately \$900 million over 10 years to continue existing programs and to implement new priority fish projects with the tribes.

THE TRIBES COMMIT to accomplishing biological objectives with the funds, linked to meeting the agencies' statutory requirements.

The parties agree that the federal government's requirements under the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act and Northwest Power Act are satisfied for the next 10 years.

They have agreed to work together to support these agreements in all appropriate venues.

The agreements would specifically resolve, for these parties, ESA litigation pending before U.S. District Court Judge James Redden.

NORTHWEST WATER user representatives such as Semanko – who also sits on the Family Farm Alliance Advisory Committee – are upbeat and hopeful.

“This will allow the region to move forward with reasonable solutions – and avoid the mindset of the radical environmentalists who continually seek to tear out the dams and take our water, regardless of the consequences,” he said.

For specific details of the MOAs and the types of projects involved, please visit: www.critfc.org and www.salmonrecovery.gov.

Water 2025 Grant Applicants Sought

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has announced that the request for proposals for the Water 2025 Challenge Grant Program for Fiscal Year 2008 is now available online at www.grants.gov.

Reclamation is seeking proposals for cooperative projects that will increase water use efficiency, conservation, and/or water marketing.

SINCE 2004, the Water 2025 Challenge Grant Program has funded 122 projects, which represent a combined investment of more than \$96 million in water improvements, including a non-federal cost-share of more than \$70 million.

This program provides a 50/50 cost-share funding to irrigation and water districts for projects focused on water conservation, improved efficiency, and water marketing.

PROJECTS WILL be selected through a competitive process and should meet the goals of Water 2025 which are encouraging voluntary water banks and other market-based measures, promote the use of new technology for water conservation and efficiency, and increase cooperation and collaboration among federal, state, tribal, and private organizations.

Entities that may submit proposals are irrigation and/or water districts and other entities created under state law with water management authority. The deadline for submitting proposals is April 28 at 3 p.m. MDT.

Californians Are Paying The Price For Saving Fish

By **MIKE WADE**

Executive Director, California Farm Water Coalition

San Joaquin Valley farmers are wondering how much more water they will lose to a court decision protecting an endangered fish after seeing 600,000 acre feet already diverted from the Delta pumps that send water to farms and 23 million Californians.

A federal court decision last year placed the Delta smelt above water deliveries from the Delta in hopes of stemming a declining fish population. Despite water interests presenting several causes for the decline to the judge, restrictions on Delta pumps were singled out as the only action the judge could take. Other causes submitted were invasive species, lack of smelt food supply and water quality.

Because the judge did not have judicial authority over these other causes, his hands were tied and he took action on establishing criteria that would result in reduced pumping. More than 600,000 acre-feet has been lost to farms and cities since Christmas. Farmers are keeping their fingers crossed that this is all they will lose but no one is very hopeful.

Water from the state and federal pumping plants send Delta water to farms and more than 23 million Californians, stretching from the Santa Clara Valley to San Diego. Farmers are preparing for the water shortfall by planting less acreage and drilling new wells to pump water from underground aquifers. Avocado farmers in San Diego have “stumped” or cut back grown avocado trees in order to curb production. Cities have encouraged their residents to voluntarily conserve water.

One of the unfortunate results of farmers losing water is they have been forced to lay off a part of their workforce. Between 546 and 1,150 jobs have

Judge Levels Another Blow To Delta Exports

California’s agricultural and urban water agencies and users, who number in the millions of people and millions of acres, have been handed another water supply setback by a U.S. District Judge in Fresno.

On April 16, Judge Oliver Wanger issued a 151-page decision that invalidated a key part of a major federal water plan on grounds that it violates the Endangered Species Act by not adequately protecting winter-run chinook salmon, spring-run chinook salmon and Central Valley steelhead.

Practical effects to Californians are not yet known. Much of the Bay Area, San Joaquin Valley and Southern California are already beginning to feel impacts from Delta water export pumping curtailments that have resulted from Judge Wanger’s decisions last year aimed at protecting the threatened Delta smelt. Further supply reductions are likely

A hearing in the latest case is scheduled for April 25 in U.S. District Court in Fresno.

already been lost in one water district alone and that number could easily double when considering the remaining farms in the San Joaquin Valley.

No one really knows what is causing the most damage to the smelt. Yet, more and more scientists are pointing to factors other than the pumps.

A new biological opinion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is expected in September of this year and will set new guidelines for pumping water from the Delta.

Farmers are waiting for the other shoe to drop when the new biological opinion is released. While farmers are concerned with getting through this year with less water, the unknown of years to come is an even greater worry.

Senate OKs Bill To Cap Reimbursable Water Site Security

The U.S. Senate earlier this month passed a parks, lands and water legislative package that contains the site security bill that the Family Farm Alliance and other water and power customers have been pushing for over one year.

This bipartisan legislation would require the federal government to cap security costs at federal hydroelectric facilities.

THE U.S. HOUSE of Representatives in December passed site security legislation (H.R. 1662) that would cap operations and maintenance costs at the existing level, codify that capital costs are non-reimbursable, and provide for greater consultation with customers and oversight by Congress.

Senator Bingaman (NEW MEXICO) earlier this year announced that the House-passed version was included in the National Forests, Parks, Public Land and Reclamation Project Authorization Act of 2007 (S. 2483) – a bipartisan collection of nearly 60 individual bills under the jurisdiction of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The package passed by the Senate now goes back to the House for another vote.

“We are hopeful that this will move quickly though the House,” said Joe Raeder, the Alliance’s representative in Washington .

A Great Big

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MARCH 2008

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To learn how you can become a member, please visit our newly-redesigned website, www.familyfarmalliance.org or call Executive Director Dan Keppen at (541) 850-9007.



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