

**Alaska Wilderness League * Audubon * The Bay Institute * Center for Biological Diversity
Conservation Northwest * Defenders of Wildlife * Earthjustice * Endangered Species Coalition
Epic-Environmental Protection Information Center * Greenpeace * Klamath Forest Alliance
League of Conservation Voters * Natural Resources Defense Council * Oregon Wild * Sierra Club
Southern Environmental Law Center * Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance**

Oppose the House Week of War on Our Wildlife and Wildlands

February 4, 2014

Dear Representative:

This week the House is expected to consider a series of bills that would cause significant damage to our nation's wildlife and wildlands. We urge you to oppose H.R. 3590, H.R. 3964 and H.R. 2954, which collectively constitute a week long war on America's wildlife and wildlands.

H.R. 3590, the Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreation Act, expected on the House floor Tuesday

Under the guise of expanding hunting and fishing access on public lands, H.R. 3590, the so-called "sportsman's legislation," undermines the Wilderness Act and environmental reviews on national wildlife refuges. This bill would silence the voice of hunters and anglers – and other public stakeholders – in refuge decision-making by permanently exempting all national wildlife refuge management decisions from review and public disclosure under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In one fell swoop, this exemption would waive environmental reviews for the entire National Wildlife Refuge System, an enormous and dangerous loophole that would apply to more than 150 million acres of federal land and water and would take away the ability for sportsmen and others to weigh in on development, road construction, water management and other decisions that could severely impact recreational use and wildlife on refuges. In addition, this bill could well be interpreted to authorize many activities currently prohibited in Wilderness, including the use of mechanized equipment and construction of temporary roads and permanent structures, and would waive the Toxic Substances Control Act as it pertains to lead ammunition and fishing sinkers despite cheap and available alternatives.

H.R. 3964, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley Emergency Water Delivery Act, expected on the House floor Wednesday

H.R. 3964 is a radical and unjustified response to California drought that is intended to override Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections in the Bay-Delta and shut down the San Joaquin River Restoration Program. The bill uses the drought to attack these important programs and make them scapegoats for the water crisis in California. Existing restrictions are not in place because of the ESA and waiving them will not make it rain. It also would explicitly preempt state water law and water rights, overturning more than a century of precedent under the 1902 Reclamation Act. It directs the United States to breach its obligations under a court-approved settlement agreement to restore the San Joaquin River, a settlement that farmers, fishermen, conservation groups, and the state and federal governments continue to support and implement. As with the other bills, this legislation would also undermine meaningful public input and environmental review by limiting the application of NEPA. It would also dramatically weaken or eliminate federal laws protecting salmon and other native fish in California, which protect thousands of fishing jobs in California and Oregon and protect water quality for Delta farmers.

H.R. 2954, a package of damaging bills included in a bill whose title suggests only the conveyance of lands in Escambia County, Florida, expected on the House floor Thursday

H.R. 2954 includes a number of environmentally destructive public lands bills, including ones that would overturn existing effective resource and wildlife conservation protections at Cape Hatteras National Seashore (**HR. 819**), eliminate or delay timely reviews of grazing leases necessary to ensure sound conservation of species like the imperiled greater sage-grouse (**HR. 657**), and mandate salvage logging on over 150,000 acres of the Stanislaus National Forest and 129 acres of BLM land impacted by the California Rim Fire while waiving *all* federal law and eliminating the public's ability to seek administrative and judicial review (**H.R. 3188**).

The bill would overturn a multi-year National Park Service process at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore that has resulted in balanced provisions that protect threatened piping plover shorebirds and endangered nesting sea turtles while preserving the economic health of the community. The bill's grazing provisions would eviscerate public input and environmental review under NEPA by creating unwarranted categorical exclusions. In addition, the grazing provisions would prohibit public protest of grazing decisions and frustrate the ability of the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service to implement new conservation measures under consideration as part of their joint National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy. The bill's salvage logging provisions ignore the substantial scientific evidence that salvage logging impedes landscape recovery, leaves behind slash materials that increase fire risk, and fouls drinking water supplies with disrupted sediment and silt. These provisions are also strongly opposed by the Administration and are wholly unnecessary, since the planning for and removal of hazard trees is already underway, barring the need for any legislation.

We urge you to vote "no" on all three measures and oppose this week's war on America's wildlife and wildlands in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

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