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September 21, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar,
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar,

I recently had the opportunity to read your remarks delivered at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco and was shocked by your callous disregard for the people suffering in the San Joaquin Valley. In the future, I hope you will consider broadening your audience to communities in the San Joaquin Valley. There are many venues available, including food banks, foreclosed homes and vacant buildings for you to use for your speech.

During your remarks, you called attention to and lauded the people who worked together to build our nation's infrastructure, such as California's state and federal water projects. You suggested that these bygone visionaries are the predecessors of men like yourself. However, those prior leaders worked to increase California's fresh water supplies. You are working to implement policies that reduce them.

The facts speak for themselves. Under your leadership, the Department of Interior has systematically attacked the very infrastructure you praise. Worse, your actions related to the Delta have been exposed as politically motivated and illegal. This scandal, as outlined by the U.S. District Court's recent admonition of your agency, is damning and should be the subject of Congressional Oversight Hearings.

Mr. Secretary, despite your attempt to cloak your actions in pragmatism, you and your agency have developed a draconian record unparalleled in recent history. Not only have you implemented illegal policies, but you have aided and abetted the extortionist practices of radical groups whose "environmentalism" comes a distant second to left-wing politics. In short, yours has been a job killing, infrastructure crippling agency – one that delivers artificial water shortages where crops once grew.

You should be ashamed of your Department and truly embarrassed by the decision handed down to you by the U.S. District Court. The transcript from the Motion to Stay hearing on the Delta smelt cases reads in part:

"[The federal government] haven't just violated the Endangered Species Act in producing an unlawful BiOp and unlawful and reasonable and prudent alternatives, they've also violated NEPA, which, in effect, prevented any rational, any what the Court would believe to be informed, competent and considerate reflective analysis of the human health and safety impacts, impacts on the State of California water supply and related impacts by not performing a NEPA analysis, not preparing an EIS and not following the law in any regard to that extent."

The court went on to challenge the credibility of the federal government's expert witnesses. These are the same witnesses you have relied on to bring economic destruction to the families in the San Joaquin Valley.

The Court on the Fish and Wildlife Service's expert witness:

"The Court finds that Dr. Norris' testimony, as it has been presented in this courtroom and now in her subsequent declaration, she may be a very reasonable person and she may be a good scientist, she may be honest, but she has not been honest with this Court. I find her to be incredible as a witness. I find her testimony to be that of a zealot. And I'm not overstating the case, I'm not being histrionic, I'm not being dramatic. I've never seen anything like it. And I've seen a few witnesses testify."

The Court on the Bureau of Reclamation's expert witness:

"I'm going to start with Mr. Feyrer...There can be no acceptance by a court of the United States of the conduct that has been engaged in in this case by these witnesses. And I am going to make a very clear and explicit record to support that finding of agency bad faith because, candidly, the only inference that the Court can draw is that it is an attempt to mislead and to deceive the Court into accepting what is not only not the best science, it's not science. There is speculation. There is primarily, mostly contradicted opinions that are presented that the Court not only finds no basis for, but they can't be anything but false because a witness can't testify under oath on a witness stand and then, within approximately a month, make statements that are so contradictory that they're absolutely irreconcilable with what has been stated earlier."

Your tenure and that of the Obama Administration as a whole have made it abundantly clear that a utopian Green Agenda is more important than working families in America. The unemployed in the San Joaquin Valley have become collateral damage as you pursue control over our nation's vast resources. Along the way, you have damaged the very integrity of science and undermined the democratic process.

In future, I hope your remarks will be tempered with recognition of the serious damage you and your Agency have done to this country. Starving people and communities of water, whatever the cause, is wrong. It is reminiscent of the actions of brutal dictators such as Robert Mugabe and Saddam Hussein who used water as a weapon against their own populations.

Sincerely,



DEVIN NUNES
Member of Congress

CC: Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy
Chairman Doc Hastings
Chairman Tom McClintock
Congressman Wally Herger
Congressman Jeff Denham