



## **AB 2975 – State Protection of Federal Wild & Scenic Rivers**

### **Summary:**

AB 2975 provides for the inclusion of a federal wild and scenic river in California into the state wild and scenic rivers system if the federal government acts to eliminate federal protection for all or some of the federally protected river. AB 2975 directs the California Natural Resources Agency Secretary to add that river to the state system after holding a public hearing about the federal action.

### **Background:**

There are more than 2,145 miles of rivers and streams in California protected in the federal and state wild and scenic rivers systems. The two systems provide similar protection – they prohibit new dams and major diversions on protected river segments, classify segments as wild, scenic, or recreational (based on the level of development at the time of designation), and federal and state agencies are required to protect the free-flowing character and river values of designated rivers and streams.

Since 2011, the House of Representatives has considered at least three bills to remove federal protection for part of the Merced Wild River to allow for expansion of McClure Reservoir. The proposed expansion would drown a portion of this wild river and wipe out most of the known population of the state-protected Merced Canyon limestone salamander. Reservoir expansion also raises serious dam safety concerns similar to those regarding Oroville Dam.

There are about 747 miles of federally protected wild and scenic rivers in California that are preserved in their free-flowing condition for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. AB 2975 applies to these federally protected rivers if Congress or the Trump Administration were to pass legislation or enact an Executive Order were to act to eliminate federal protection from all or a portion of a federal river, or exempt a federally protected river from the provision in the federal act that prohibits new

dams and major diversions from designated river segments.

### **AB 2975:**

AB 2975 provides state protection for a federally protected wild and scenic river if the federal government acts to eliminate federal protection for all or part of a federally protected river or acts to exempt the river from the federal provision that prohibits dams or major diversions on protected river segments.

In response to an action by the federal government to eliminate or reduce federal protection of a wild and scenic river, AB 2975 directs the California Natural Resources Agency Secretary to hold a public hearing on the federal action, add the river or river segment threatened by the federal action to the state wild and scenic rivers system, and classify as wild, scenic, and recreational the appropriate river segments.

### **Support:**

Friends of the River (sponsor), Ancient Forest International, All Outdoors Rafting, American Rivers, AquAlliance, American Whitewater, Coast Action Group, California Outdoors, California Trout, California Wilderness Coalition, Community Hiking Club, California Hydropower Reform Coalition, Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, California Water Impact Network, Californians for Western Wilderness, Defenders of Wildlife, Foothill Conservancy, Friends of the Eel River, Friends of the Inyo, Friends of Plumas Wilderness, Institute for Fishery Resources, Keep Sespe Wild, Los Padres Forest Watch, Merced River Conservation Committee, Northcoast Environmental Center, North Fork American River Alliance, Natural Resources Defense Council, OARS, Protect American River Canyons, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, Planning and Conservation League, Sierra Forest Legacy, Sierra Club California, The Bay Institute, The Wilderness Society, Tuolumne River Trust, Ventana Wilderness Alliance, SAFE Alternatives for our Forest Environment, Willits Environmental Center, Whitewater Voyages, Winnemem Wintu Tribe, Zephyr Whitewater Expeditions.

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