DRASTIC FEDERAL BUDGET CUTS BODE ILL FOR ENVIRONMENT

Due to the inability of Congress to agree upon means to reduce the national budget deficit, the previously authorized drastic cuts known as “sequestration” went into effect on March 2. Pursuant to “sequestration,” federal spending will be cut $85 billion for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013. Half of the cut will be in defense expenditures and the other half in domestic programs. The threat to the environment arises from the fact that the brunt of the non-military cuts will fall on the federal workforce of 2.7 million employees. Large scale furloughs and layoffs will occur unless and until Congress can agree upon a different program of deficit reduction.

Significant losses in staffing for the Environmental Protection Agency, National Park Service, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Fish & Wildlife Service etc. will result in curtailed federal land management and environmental law enforcement. California’s valuable native flora and ecosystems are bound to suffer.

The arbitrary and ill planned “sequestration” was originally intended as a spur to Congress to come together on a sensible deficit reduction plan. We can do our part in trying to correct a bad situation by writing, e-mailing or telephoning our U.S. Senators and Congressman to PLEASE work for a reasonable deficit reduction plan that does not punish the environment. Consult your telephone book for addresses and telephone numbers of public officials.

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