UNDEMOCRATIC CONGRESSIONAL RULES OF PROCEDURE

The danger that in 2017 the administration and its supporters in Congress will repeal or weaken federal environmental protection laws is aggravated by the absence of any check or balance to the procedures the House and Senate follow in passing bills. Article 1 of the Constitution gives each house the sole right to determine its procedure, subject only to the requirement for a majority to constitute a quorum to do business. The U.S. Supreme Court can review the constitutionality of laws, but cannot question the procedure followed in enacting them. The House and Senate can change their rules of procedure at any time and pass bills without committee hearings or public input. In the past, this abuse of democratic procedure has taken the form of last minute riders to bills, often to tack on provisions weakening environmental protection laws. Public outrage at unfair and undemocratic riders has kept their use at a minimum in the past. However, can we count on the present administration and its supporters to be concerned about fair play and democratic procedures in passing bills? The only way to hold elected federal officials accountable for this type of abuse is the ballot. We must communicate with our elected federal officials and let them know that we will hold them accountable for laws damaging to the environment and undemocratic procedures in passing them.

***********************************************************************************************************

The full text of bills and the Legislative Analyst's summary are available on the California Legislature Information website (Click Link Here).

CNPS positions on bills are available at CNPS Legislative Report (Click Link Here). Overview of CNPS Legislation Program (Click Link Here).