

CSPA Fisheries News
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CSPA, NCCFFF, CSBA Intervene In Striped Bass Litigation

May 20, 2008. The California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA) and its close allies the Northern Calif. Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers (NCCFFF) and the California Striped Bass Association (CSBA) have jointly intervened into the law suit filed by the "Coalition for a Sustainable Delta" that is aimed at destroying the public's striped bass fishery that historically generated some \$50 million annually to our state and local economies. The Coalition is composed of "Water Districts" that front some Central Valley agricultural interests who hold water contracts from the Federal Central Valley Water Project.

While their litigation won't do anything to make the Delta more sustainable, it would compel the State to abort the management of the estuary's striped bass and all sport-fishing regulations that would protect the fishery from excessive harvest. Even though the estuary's once premier sport fishery is a shadow of its former greatness and has fallen on hard times, along with all of the other fisheries that depend on the Delta, corporate ag feels the need to destroy this very valuable public resource so they can continue to drink at the public's water trough and maximize their profits.

If they prevail, striped bass will become a non-sport fishery that would not be protected from excessive harvest. It could quite possibly be exterminated because it would not be protected under State sport fishing laws and there would be no harvest limit and no regulation on the methods allowed to harvest it. Even though the fishery is alleged by the coalition to be vicious non-native predator of Delta smelt and salmon listed under the Endangered Species Acts, the scientific evidence clearly demonstrates the opposite is true.

So, who are the interests behind this litigation anyway? The growers who filed the litigation have the luxury of using their water districts to file the litigation [Bellridge Water Storage District, Berrenda Mesa Water District, Lost Hills Water District, Wheeler Ridge - Maricopa Water Storage District]. It appears many of them live in the Southern Central Valley where much of the desert has turned green due to nonnative crops grown by nonnative people who are very fond of perpetuating nonnative myths to protect their nonnative capital at the expense of the public's fishery resources.

You should keep in mind that this is fight is not just about striped bass! Should the Coalition prevail, then consider that many of the other fish that swim in the Delta are non-native predators (something that all fish have in common) that will become candidates for extinction such as largemouth bass, panfish, and American shad to name a

few. Who was it that said, “You’re either part of the problem or part of the solution.”? That’s a pretty broad generalization, but in this case it’s meaningful!

The South Delta Water Agency and Central Delta Water Agency have also filed for intervention in the lawsuit refuting the Coalition’s allegations. Judge Oliver Wanger in Fresno will consider their intervention and our intervention on July 14, 2008.

This litigation will cost a lot of money and we need real help in raising funds for this cause. If you believe that we shouldn’t let the Coalition get away with trying to destroy this fishery and our right to enjoy it, please go to our new website at <http://www.calsport.org/> and donate!