

The NUNES Report

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Quick Facts

In February, Rep. Nunes helped 32 constituents overcome problems with government agencies. For the year, the Congressman has directly solved issues for 79 constituents and is currently assisting 330 others.

Nunes backs railroad legislation

Rail upgrades would improve air by limiting truck traffic on congested roads

Rep. Devin Nunes is co-sponsoring legislation to improve short-line railroads in California.

Regional short-line railroads handle a large portion of shipping currently done in Central California. However, if the tracks are not improved to current rail standards more and more shipping would have to be done by truck, making an already poor air quality problem in the valley even worse.

The bill, known as H.R. 876, was introduced in the House of Representatives in February and has already gained 248 co-sponsors. The legislation would give tax credits to short-line companies that improve their rail system. If passed the companies would be eligible for \$10,000 per mile of improved track, which represents about 25 percent of the project cost.

Without rail shipping in the Central Valley, more than 20,000 additional trucks would be needed to handle the freight.

Experts say that each rail freight car carries as much



Rep. Devin Nunes speaks to a crowd at Gang-Nail Truss in Visalia about the air quality and economic benefits H.R. 876 would have on the Central Valley.

as three to four semi-trucks.

While air quality is one way the legislation can help the Central Valley, the bill would also have significant benefits for local businesses.

Tim Rouch, co-owner of Gang-Nail Truss in Visalia, said the legislation will help keep his business running smoothly.

"My business depends on the use of rails like those of the San Joaquin Valley Railroad. By keeping them maintained and functioning well, my company can oper-

ate efficiently and competitively."

Other local leaders have spoken out in favor of the legislation, including Visalia Councilman Don Landers, Tulare County Supervisor and San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District board member Steve Worthley.

San Joaquin Valley Railroad has already begun rehabilitating its tracks at a cost of about \$14 million.

Nunes talks with orange growers

Rep. Devin Nunes met recently with local orange growers in Orange Cove to update them on his activities in Washington, D.C. and answer a wide range of questions on legislation and matters pending before United States Congress.

He talked about ongoing trade negotiations with various countries around the world and the potential affect they may have on California farmers and producers.

Later, he toured the orange-packing plant and met some of the employees.



State Legislature wasting time and money on mascot bill

Rep. Devin Nunes criticized Assemblywoman Jackie Goldberg for her bill that would force California schools to eliminate their mascots representing Native Americans.

"In recent weeks, I have received numerous letters from constituents expressing displeasure with actions taken by the California State Assembly on your bill, AB 858. As a citizen of California and a graduate of Tulare Union High School (TUHS), whose mascot is the Redskin, I have to say that I agree with their concerns," Mr. Nunes said in letter to Assemblywoman Goldberg.

The congressman called the California Racial Mascots Act, which has already passed the Assembly and

awaits a vote in the state Senate, a misguided attempt at political correctness.

"In fact, I have been informed that TUHS officials have sought the counsel of many local Native American tribes. Each time, the tribes have commended the school, students, and faculty on the lengths they have gone to uphold the respect, dignity and heritage of TUHS's mascot," Mr. Nunes said in his letter.

In addition to threatening longstanding and proud traditions of many schools, the bill would place an undue financial burden on schools already struggling to deal with the state's financial mess.



Tulare Union High School
Redskins



Dear Assemblymember Goldberg:

In recent weeks, I have received numerous letters from constituents expressing displeasure with actions taken by the California State Assembly on your bill, AB 858. As a citizen of California and a graduate of Tulare Union High School (TUHS), whose mascot is the Redskin, I have to say that I agree with their concerns.

The California Racial Mascots Act is a misguided attempt to mandate political correctness in schools. Simply eliminating traditional school mascots like Redskins, Apaches, and Braves will place a huge financial burden on local school districts that are already facing cuts in financial education dollars. Now, instead of buying textbooks and computers, local school districts will have to spend scarce dollars on replacing uniforms, logos, and letterhead.

Using a Sacramento based cookie cutter policy to resolve an issue that is best left to local school boards is a waste of taxpayer dollars. Each situation is different and should be treated that way. In fact, I have been informed that TUHS officials have sought the counsel of many local Native American tribes. Each time, the tribes have commended the school, students, and faculty on the lengths they have gone to uphold the respect, dignity and heritage of TUHS's mascot. While I can not speak for the nearly 60 different schools with a so called "discriminatory" mascot, I firmly believe that TUHS should not be arbitrarily classified as racists.

It seems to me that the State Assembly should be working on ways to reduce California's budget crisis rather than imposing worthless new costs on the hardworking taxpayers of our great state.

Sincerely,

Devin Nunes
Member of Congress

Legislative work encompasses many issues

Agriculture

California Rural Legal Assistance

The Office of Inspector General recently released an investigative report into the practices of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). The report concluded that California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA), a recipient of LSC funding, did not maintain objective integrity and independence from a legal organization that engaged in prohibited activities in violation of federal law. After reviewing the conclusions of the investigation, Congressman Nunes contacted LSC President Helaine Barnett requesting that LSC take action to address this matter. In his letter, Congressman Nunes conveyed to President Barnett that it was inappropriate and illegal for federal tax dollars to be used in CRLA's legal activities aimed at halting dairy farm development and job creation in the Central Valley. Lawsuits benefiting from the inappropriate use of federal dollars have attempted to leverage cash settlements from defendant farmers and county governments. These extortion efforts and junk lawsuits are bad enough when initiated by private parties, but it is highly offensive that tax dollars were used.

Pierce's Disease

Pierce's Disease, spread by the glassy-winged sharpshooter, is highly destructive to California's \$2.8 billion grape industry. Sharpshooters also spread Almond Scorch, threatening the State's \$838 million almond industry. Recognizing the need to strengthen efforts to

eliminate this pest, Congressman Nunes joined other Representatives from California in supporting emergency funding from the United States Department of Agriculture. Under an existing emergency declaration, USDA has the authority to provide additional resources to the State. Congressman Nunes urged USDA Secretary Veneman to expedite the release of this funding.

Armenian

Armenian Genocide

As a cosponsor of H.Res. 193, the Armenian Genocide Resolution, Rep. Nunes sent a letter to Speaker Hastert urging him to bring this legislation to the House floor for a vote as soon as possible. This measure, commemorates the 15th anniversary of U.S. implementation of the Genocide Convention and reinforces our nation's dedication to this landmark human rights treaty. Approved in the shadow of the Holocaust, the Convention stands today as the international community's best hope for the realization of the noble aim of eradicating forever the crime of genocide. The House Judiciary Committee, recognizing the importance of this effort, adopted H.Res. 193 without opposition in May of 2003. One hundred and ten Representatives have cosponsored this measure, including both the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee.

Environment

Oxygenate Waiver

In a letter to Mike Leavitt, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Rep. Nunes

expressed strong support for the State's oxygenate waiver request. On February 2, 2004, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the California Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) submitted a request for a waiver of the 2 percent oxygenate mandate for California's gasoline. A Federal waiver is crucial to California's ability to improve its ground water and air quality through the use of reformulated gasoline. The EPA's approval of California's waiver request will not only help California protect the environment, but will also allow California refiners the flexibility to produce more cost-effective gasoline formulations, saving our consumers money at the pump.

General

Identity Theft

Identity theft is a serious problem, not to mention a serious crime. Since the 1990s, there has been a sharp increase in the number of crooks who steal people's personal information and assume their identity to charge up huge credit card bills, telephone bills, buy cars, and apply for loans. If your identity has been stolen, it often takes years and thousands of dollars to repair the damage done to your good name and good credit. Victims of identity theft may lose job opportunities, be refused loans for education, housing, cars and even be arrested for crimes they didn't commit. Having your identity stolen is more than a headache, it is a mess. Identity theft is the number one consumer com-

Quick Facts

In February, Rep. Nunes organized tours of the U.S. Capitol, Library of Congress, Supreme Court, Kennedy Center, National Archives, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and Mt. Vernon for 58 constituents.

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plaint. Consequently, Rep. Nunes cosponsored the Identity Theft Penalty Enhancement Act (H.R. 1731) which is aimed at helping facilitate the prosecution of criminals who steal identities in order to commit felonies. It will create a new and separate crime of “aggravated identity theft” for any person who uses the identity of another person to commit certain felonies, bringing with it an additional mandatory sentence of two years for most felonies and five years for terror-related felonies.

Grant Support

Watershed Initiative

Rep. Nunes understands that “Watershed Coalition Groups” (Coalition Groups) have formed throughout California’s Central Valley in response to state water quality mandates, and will seek to implement watershed programs designed to address water quality issues associated with the discharge of water from irrigated lands and managed wetlands. Each Coalition Group represents a broad geographic area. They are utilizing the organizational concept wherein a particular coalition provides administrative and analytical support for regional groups, which will ultimately utilize monitoring results and be responsible for working with growers to implement watershed practices. The Coalition Groups hope to aggressively implement innovative, market-based water quality management programs, a concept that is consistent with EPA’s desire to test the

potential of market-based approaches to environmental issues generally. Consequently, Rep. Nunes sent a letter to the Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator Wayne Nastri to express strong support for the Watershed Initiative grant program to invest in drainage mapping, targeted monitoring, drainage prioritization and information access in the Central Valley, which will bolster scientists’ and landowners’ understanding of watershed functions.

Water

San Joaquin River

Few river systems have been examined more closely than the San Joaquin. The Friant Water Users Authority and Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) have conducted recent studies on whether and/or how the San Joaquin River might be restored. Unfortunately, limitations within those studies have failed to adequately address all issues. The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation and the California Department of Fish and Game have taken principal roles in an important new study of the San Joaquin River downstream from Friant Dam. This new study is expected to provide more concrete answers to the complexities

and impacts of river restoration. Consequently, in a letter to the Bureau of Reclamation, Rep. Nunes encouraged continuation of funding for Phase 1 of the study and a commitment to funding activities in subsequent phases to ensure successful completion of this important study.

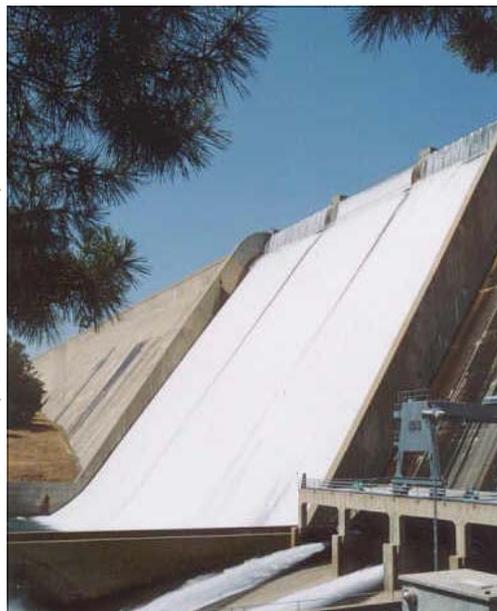
Tales of the San Joaquin – A River Journey

The events surrounding the release of the film “Tales of the San Joaquin – A River Journey” gave Rep. Nunes no choice but to contact Governor Schwarzenegger. In a letter to the governor, Mr. Nunes said that it is appalling that management at CALFED allowed this blatantly biased project to be funded with taxpayer dollars. “From its inception, this project’s goal was to ‘create an evocative picture of the river when it was wild, and imagining what it might look like

in the future when it is restored,” the letter said. “Based on this quote from the filmmaker’s own grant proposal, it is easily inferred that the primary goal of this film is to convince the public that Friant Dam should be breached thereby leaving the entire economy of the San Joaquin Valley’s east-side in shambles.”

Proving this point, the end of the film indicates that the current lawsuit between the Bay Institute, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the Bureau of Reclamation will accomplish this task. This film became the centerpiece of a fundraiser for the Bay Institute and NRDC in San Francisco before the general public was even allowed to see the video.

“The funds raised at the film premiere will directly support these organizations’ lawsuit against the Federal government - clearly a politically motivated activity,” the letter continued. “Actions such as this documentary are unacceptable and should not be tolerated. CALFED should be fostering cooperation among all stakeholders for the betterment of the state rather than encouraging divisiveness, which is counterproductive to the program’s mission. If these types of activities continue to occur, we respectfully urge you to consider new management at CALFED that would be a better steward of taxpayer dollars.”



Friant Dam at Millerton Lake