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# California: Court Upholds Guidelines to Protect Fish

By REUTERS MARCH 13, 2014

An appeals court on Thursday sided with environmentalists over growers and upheld federal guidelines that limit water diversions in order to protect delta smelt. The United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled that a lower court should not have overturned recommendations that the state reduce exports of water to the south from the north. The reduced exports leave more water in the Sacramento Delta for the finger-size delta smelt and have been blamed for exacerbating the effects of drought for humans. Damien Schiff, a lawyer for growers, said the ruling “bodes ill for farmers, farm laborers and millions of other Californians dependent on a reliable water supply.” Kate Poole, a lawyer for the Natural Resources Defense Council, said growers’ hopes of taking more water out of the delta would not solve California’s problems. At issue is a 2008 report by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, which concluded that the fish’s existence was threatened and recommended limited exports of water to farmers and Southern California.

A version of this brief appears in print on March 14, 2014, on page A18 of the New York edition with the headline: California: Court Upholds Guidelines to Protect Fish.

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