

McClintock may put Auburn Dam back on the table

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy News Service

WASHINGTON — Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Elk Grove, could start making waves in California water.

As new chairman of the House water and power subcommittee, McClintock can promote his pet projects while he squeezes environmentalists. Politically, this means renewed talk of an Auburn dam, stricter scrutiny of San Joaquin River restoration and more support for hydropower.

“We need to change the central objective of our federal water and power policy to one of abundance,” McClintock said in an interview. “That means building more water projects.”

In theory, McClintock’s position strengthens the staunch conservative’s ability to pursue his agenda. The House panel writes water legislation. It oversees spending by the Bureau of Reclamation, which operates California’s Central Valley Project. It holds administration officials’ feet to the fire.

In practice, McClintock’s ability to convert stature into action remains an open question.

The subcommittee’s other members have not yet been named, including the key position of senior Democrat.

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