



Westlands Water District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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10% Water Allocation Already in Jeopardy

The San Luis Delta Mendota Water Authority and Westlands Water District jointly filed a motion today on behalf of the two million Californians they serve, seeking a preliminary injunction to prevent the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from shutting down the pumps and further restricting the water in the system.

Just this week the Bureau of Reclamation announced a 10% allocation to South of the Delta Contractors. That is less than 2.5 inches of water per acre of farm ground in the region. Already hundreds of thousands of acres lie fallow for the remainder of this year, and thousands of acres of almonds, pistachios, grapes and citrus run the risk of dying due to lack of water.

That 10% of water supply could be lost if the Fish and Wildlife Service imposes a new set of restrictions beginning on May 18th on the Bureau of Reclamation's operation of the Central Valley Project pumps in the Delta. These restrictions threaten to prevent the pumping necessary to provide even the meager 10% allocation.

Under these pumping restrictions, if, for example, ten percent of the smelt population were in the vicinity of the pumps, the new rules would restrict pumping to ensure that any harm from the pumps would be limited to about one tenth of one percent of the overall population of these tiny fish. This rule would apply even though this year the survey data show most of the delta smelt are in fact far away from the pumps. The rule is based on the hypothetical results of a model instead of data about actual conditions.

Currently, the lack of a water supply has resulted in unemployment levels at and above 40% in many communities. Citizens are standing in food lines weekly to feed their families because there are not jobs available to harvest fruits and vegetables.

"The harm we are trying to prevent is a perfect illustration of how precarious the lives of two million people and the future of an industry that delivers billions of dollars worth of fresh fruits and vegetables to the nation and the world have become," said Jean Sagouspe, President of Westlands Water District

As a result of the cutbacks in federal water deliveries in this third year of drought, unemployment rates in some valley towns have soared to 40 percent. The numerous declarations from valley residents that were submitted to the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of California, in support of the petition for a preliminary injunction detail the consequences for people. Food banks are delivering over 1 Million pounds of food per month, a 50% increase over last year at this time. Crime rates are rising along with the need

for health care and other social services. Revenues to support police and fire and other municipal services are plummeting. School attendance is declining as families are forced to move. And air pollution is increasing as a result of the dust from hundreds of thousands of acres of vacant fields.

The action was taken today in hopes of bringing reason to the courts about the human needs that have been disregarded in the name of protecting a species of fish in one specific location without looking at the ecosystem as a whole in an effort to solve the problem. People are affected today by these actions that have made it impossible to deliver water to the citizens of the state.