



Westlands Water District

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Statement of Westlands Water District on the Introduction of the California Emergency Drought Relief Act of 2014

FRESNO, CA - Westlands Water District is encouraged with the introduction by Senator Dianne Feinstein and Senator Barbara Boxer of the California Emergency Drought Relief Act of 2014, and Westlands supports the passage of the legislation. Notwithstanding the rainfall and snow California has enjoyed over the last week, the State is facing unprecedented drought conditions. Water supply reductions resulting from these extraordinary dry conditions have been exacerbated by the implementation in prior years of regulations imposed under federal law on the operations of the federal Central Valley Project (CVP) and the California State Water Project (SWP). The legislation introduced today would provide much needed relief for the public water agencies that receive water from these projects and for the people, farms, and businesses they serve.

The California Emergency Drought Relief Act of 2014 provides congressional direction to federal agencies responsible for implementing federal regulations affecting operations of the CVP and the SWP for the duration of the drought emergency declared in January by Governor Jerry Brown. The legislation mandates that these agencies act with a sense of urgency and be as flexible as the law allows in order to minimize water supply reductions resulting from the application of those regulations. In particular, direction to manage reverse flow in Old and Middle Rivers, as prescribed by the 2008 biological opinion issued by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, to minimize water supply reductions for the CVP and the SWP and direction to maintain a one-to-one inflow/export ratio during the period from April 1 through May 31 to enable voluntary water transfers and exchanges, have the potential of generating in excess of 500,000 acre-feet for public water agencies that receive water from the CVP and the SWP.

Through its work with Senator Feinstein and Senator Boxer, Westlands knows that they are genuinely interested in working with their colleagues in the House of Representatives to find a legislative solution to the chronic water supply shortages that have devastated the San Joaquin Valley and other regions of the State. The District looks forward to working with them and members of the House of Representatives to find common sense solutions that serve the interests of all Californians.

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