



Westlands Water District

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U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Announces Zero Water Allocation for California Farms

FRESNO, CA – Today the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announced an initial zero water allocation for south-of-Delta Central Valley Project agricultural water service contractors. This comes as no surprise due to the record dry conditions experienced over the last twelve months, coupled with water supply reductions related to federal regulatory actions.

“Unfortunately, federal water management policies have made it nearly impossible to meet the water supply needs of California farmers and communities. What is particularly troubling is that these policies have provided no discernible benefit to the environment,” said Tom Birmingham, general manager of Westlands Water District. “The impact of this drought is far reaching, impacting more than 80 percent of California communities, and threatening the viability of California’s agricultural production.”

Westlands appreciates the emergency aid provided during this crisis, but until Congress acts to restore some balance between the use of water for the environment and the use of water for people, farmers and communities will remain in a crisis for the foreseeable future. Without a solution, the state can also expect to spend hundreds of millions of dollars next year providing the same relief to communities, businesses and unemployed agricultural workers. Even more alarming is that the zero allocation announced today will affect decisions about planting crops for this year and fallowing land in the future. These decisions will have consequences that reach beyond the farmers and workers in the Central Valley Region.

Westlands appeals to President Obama and Congress to capitalize on the efforts made over the last two weeks and expedite changes that will capture any new water that comes in the near future--water that could have a dramatic impact on communities and the ability of farms to survive this crisis.

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