



South Valley Water Association



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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COURT DENIES MOTION TO ENJOIN RELEASES TO THE KLAMATH RIVER

FRESNO, CA – Today a number of water agencies, experiencing a second year of a zero water allocation, joined together to express their frustration and disappointment with the latest court ruling denying relief from historic water shortages at a time when deliveries are of critical importance to the sustainability of our state.

In light of the Court's prior decisions on this topic, we do not understand this decision. Given the magnitude of harm resulting from water shortages caused by drought and decisions to reallocate water from people to the environment, we are terribly disappointed.

This began on Friday, August 21, 2015, when the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announced plans to release up to 88,000 acre-feet of CVP water from Trinity Reservoir in the hope of aiding returning **non-listed** Chinook salmon. This action, which is outside of Reclamation's authorized place of use, is a repeat of a similar action taken last year with the intention to help avoid an outbreak of a naturally-occurring disease epidemic known as Ich (pronounced "ick"). Since 2000, a significant supply of water has been set aside each year from the Trinity Reservoir for fishery protection purposes. Astonishingly, over the past four years, this has equated to more than **200,000 acre-feet** of water lost which was literally flushed down the Lower Klamath River.

Several water agencies immediately filed a lawsuit in court to stop this gross misuse of water, and many others voiced their opposition to the action. But today's ruling has negated any hope of a possible solution that would bring additional water to severely parched areas of California.

"Today, in a move that defies common sense, the United States Eastern District Court of California ruled against the interests of the people by denying the request to stop the release of 88,000 acre-feet of water. The impact of the lost water, which is in excess of 28 BILLION gallons, will be felt all over the state, and is enough water to serve 175,000 families for an entire year. Unfortunately, government agencies continue to dump the most important resource out to the ocean on one day, only to bemoan the "historic drought" the next day," said the collective voices of water districts that include San-Luis & Delta Mendota Water Authority, Westlands Water District, Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority, South Valley Water Association and San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority.

At a time when record fallowing of agricultural land is on the rise, community wells are drying up, and more than 95 percent of the State is experiencing drought conditions, today's decision is one more disappointment from achieving a reasonable balance for all Californians who depend upon a reliable water supply.

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