



Westlands Water District

3130 N. Fresno Street, P.O. Box 6056, Fresno, California 93703-6056, (559) 224-1523, FAX (559) 241-6277

PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release
Contact: Gayle Holman
(559) 241-6233

Statement by the Board of Directors of the Westlands Water District on the Selection of a New General Counsel and Special Counsel

FRESNO, CA - The Westlands Water District Board of Directors is pleased to announce the selection of Philip Williams for the position of General Counsel and Jeffrey Mitchell for the position of Special Counsel to the Board. Mr. Williams will be managing the legal affairs of the District, including providing advice on legal strategy, District policies, personnel matters, and any other matters requested by the Board. Mr. Mitchell will be advising the Board on the procedures and policies necessary to comply with laws governing special districts, including the Brown Act. In their respective roles, the two will report directly to the Board of Directors.

Philip Williams has served as Westlands' Deputy General Counsel since 2014, where he has provided legal counsel to the Board and staff and has managed litigation and administrative efforts to secure a reliable water supply future for our farmers and families. He holds a Masters degree in Public Administration from the University of Utah and a Juris Doctor and a Master of Laws in Water Resources from Pacific McGeorge School of Law. Before joining Westlands, he served over eight years as an Officer and United States Army Ranger, earning the rank of Captain, and served two tours in Iraq with the 101st Airborne Division.

Jeffrey Mitchell, a shareholder in the firm of Kronick, Moskovitz, Tiedemann, and Girard, predominantly counsels public sector clients including cities and special districts in matters relating to governance, land use, real estate, and general municipal law. Mr. Mitchell has broad experience in state and federal laws related to use and reuse of land, tax credits, development issues, and funding programs for housing and economic development projects. With more than 20 years of experience, Mr. Mitchell advises his clients on a wide range of day-to-day legal and contractual matters facing public entities.

In June of 2016, in an effort to ensure confidence in the District's decision-making, the Board made the decision to separate the roles of General Manager and General Counsel. The Board's decision acknowledged that management of the District, in light of the complexities involved in water delivery, groundwater management, and securing new water supplies, requires the full attention of the General Manager.

The Board believes the changes in the operational structure of the District will promote transparency and good government practices.

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