



Westlands Water District

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**WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STATEMENT OF WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT
ON THE PASSING OF JERALD R. "JERRY" BUTCHERT**

Don Peracchi, President of the Westlands Water District, released the following statement on behalf of the District's Board of Directors and its current and former employees:

We learned with sadness of the passing of Jerald R. "Jerry" Butchert, a former general manager of Westlands Water District. All of us at the district join in expressing our sympathy to his family and our deep appreciation for his leadership for more than 17 years.

Jerry worked in the water industry for more than 36 years. He started as an engineer in 1959 with the Fresno Irrigation District, became an executive officer of the Eel River Water Council, and eventually joined the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California before taking the helm at Westlands from 1977 to 1995. He had a trademark style of management. Even under the most difficult circumstances; he was always approachable, low-key, and level-headed. It was that leadership style that helped lead Westlands through many of the most challenging negotiations on California water issues that are still evolving today.

Westlands current general manager, Tom Birmingham, commented on Jerry's many years of exemplary service: "Jerry Butchert led Westlands Water District through difficult times, the 1977 drought, battles over reform of federal reclamation laws, closure of the San Luis Drain, and enactment of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act. Jerry was an exemplary leader and was a person of great foresight. He was among the water leaders who in 1994 crafted the Bay-Delta Accord, a historic agreement that provided water certainty for farmers and resources for ecosystem restoration in the Delta. The people who farm in Westlands today are indebted to Jerry; his influence is still felt."

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