



Water News

WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT

MAY 2016

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

Changing the Westlands Narrative

Over the last three years, anti-farming groups have been responsible for spreading an extraordinary amount of misinformation about state water allocations and the Westlands Water District. But, with your help and support, we intend to set the record straight by providing the public with information about the impacts of federal and state policies on agriculture, and tell the real story about the contributions of the farmers from this District.

Since March, Westlands Water District has been implementing an assertive communications program to proactively provide accurate information to the public. The communications program highlights the failure of California's water system to provide water to urban and agriculture communities despite the significant winter and spring rains and the replenished reservoirs. In addition, Westlands is now highly active on social media, providing information to interested parties and providing information to audiences far beyond the District. And, Westlands is proactively engaging with the media to ensure that our point of view is covered in articles about state water issues.

Our program is already making a difference. The Westlands Facebook and Twitter accounts have both seen an enormous spike in engagement and our website has had a record number of visits. But the program can be even more successful!

Here's how you can help:

1. **Spread the word.** Send the newsletter to your family, friends and business contacts.
2. **Be social.** Follow us on Twitter at [@Westlands_Water](#) and on Facebook [here](#). Be sure to comment, like and share our posts with your social network.
3. **Join the ground campaign.** Let us know if you hear or read misinformation that should be corrected, and send us your ideas.

Johnny Amaral
Deputy General Manager of External Affairs
Westlands Water District

IN THE NEWS

COMMON SENSE, NOT RAIN, NEEDED TO SOLVE CALIFORNIA'S WATER CRISIS

Fox & Hounds: Former California Manufacturers and Technology Association President Jack Stewart says Californians shouldn't have to choose between fish or families when it comes to water storage.

[READ THE FULL OP-ED](#)

CALIFORNIA GOV JERRY BROWN MAKES SOME WATER RESTRICTIONS PERMANENT

The Wall Street Journal: Governor Jerry Brown issued an executive order making some temporary water restrictions permanent to help the state through a severe drought, despite a wet winter.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

WATER RIGHTS WILL BE NEXT BIG CALIFORNIA FIGHT

Sacramento Bee: Dan Walters discusses revising California's complex structure of water rights.

[READ THE FULL OP-ED](#)

FARM GROUPS SEEK FLEXIBILITY IN WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

Ag Alert: Ag leaders urge state water-quality regulators to take a flexible, regional approach to the California Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program set to be revised with sweeping changes.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)



Like us on Facebook



CONTACT US

Westlands Water District Office
3130 N. Fresno Street
P.O. Box 6056
Fresno, CA 93703-6056

Phone: 559-224-1523
Fax: 559-241-6277

Email: info@westlandswater.org

Customer Accounting Main Line
Phone: (559) 241-6250
or 1 (800) 266-6574

Media Inquiries:
Phone: 559-241-6233
Email: pubaffairs@westlandswater.org

westlandswater.org



CALENDAR

MAY
17

WWD Board Meeting

MAY
26

Boys & Girls Club
6th Annual Westside
Fundraiser at Harris
Ranch

JUN
21

WWD Board Meeting



We are now on Twitter!

Follow us [@Westlands_Water](https://twitter.com/Westlands_Water)
and join the conversation today.

What's New: Important Notices

Governor Brown Issues Order to Continue Water Savings as Drought Persists

5-9-2016

Executive Order Aims to Make Water Conservation a Way of Life in California

SACRAMENTO - Moving to bolster California's climate and drought resilience, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. today issued an executive order that builds on temporary statewide emergency water restrictions to establish longer-term water conservation measures, including permanent monthly water use reporting, new permanent water use standards in California communities and bans on clearly wasteful practices such as hosing off sidewalks, driveways and other hardscapes.

"Californians stepped up during this drought and saved more water than ever before," said Governor Brown. "But now we know that drought is becoming a regular occurrence and water conservation must be a part of our everyday life."

Californians have responded to the call to conserve water during the drought by dialing back sprinklers, replacing lawns, fixing leaky faucets and installing more efficient toilets and washing machines. Between June 2015 and March 2016, Californians reduced water use by 23.9 percent compared with the same months in 2013 - saving enough water to provide 6.5 million Californians with water for one year.

While the severity of the drought has lessened in some parts of California after winter rains and snow, the current drought is not over. For the fifth consecutive year, dry conditions persist in many areas of the state, with limited drinking water supplies in some communities, diminished water for agricultural production and environmental habitat, and severely depleted groundwater basins. The executive order calls for long-term improvements to local drought preparation across the state, and directs the State Water Resources Control Board to develop proposed emergency water restrictions for 2017 if the drought persists.

California droughts are expected to be more frequent and persistent, as warmer winter temperatures driven by climate change reduce water held in the Sierra Nevada snowpack and result in drier soil conditions. Recognizing these new conditions, the executive order directs permanent changes to use water more wisely and efficiently, and prepare for more frequent, persistent periods of limited supply.

These new actions will help achieve a top priority in the Governor's [Water Action Plan](#) – to "Make Conservation a California Way of Life." The administration will seek public input in the coming months on new water conservation and efficiency standards called for in this executive order.

The following is a summary of the executive order issued by the Governor:

Use Water More Wisely

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the State Water Board will require monthly reporting by urban water suppliers on a permanent basis. This includes information regarding water use, conservation and enforcement. Through a public process and working with partners such as urban water suppliers, local governments and environmental groups, DWR and the State Water Board will develop new water use efficiency targets as part of a long-term conservation framework for urban water agencies. These targets go beyond the 20 percent reduction in per capita urban water use by 2020 that was embodied in SB X7-7 of 2009, and will be customized to fit the unique conditions of each water supplier.

Continued on page 5

Report from D.C. and Sacramento



WASHINGTON D.C.

H.R. 4366 (Valadao CA-21) - Authorizes a settlement to a long-standing dispute between the United States and the Westlands Water District. According to Congressman Valadao, HR 4366 is necessary to approve and authorize the settlement and has the potential to save taxpayers billions of dollars. [READ MORE.](#)

S. 2533 (Feinstein CA) - Creates the California Long-Term Provisions for Water Supply and Short-Term Provisions for Emergency Drought Relief Act. This legislation provides both long- and short-term solutions to California's water supply crisis. [READ MORE.](#)

Garamendi Legislation - Congressman Garamendi announced his intention to introduce legislation to address California's water crisis. According to Garamendi, the legislation will mirror S. 2533 by Senator Feinstein.

New Effort to Expedite Relief to Farmers and Southern California Communities - House Leader McCarthy and Members of the GOP California Delegation are leading an effort to include language in the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2017. The language is designed to take advantage of the

increased water supply and deliver water to California's Central Valley and southern Californian communities while protecting existing water rights.

House Leader McCarthy and his colleagues stressed the need for immediate action by the Senate to take advantage of the recent rains and increased snowpack. The GOP delegation criticized the Bureau of Reclamation for pumping less water this year than last year when the rainfall and snowpack were at much lower levels.

SACRAMENTO

Bill Status Update

SB 1317 (Wolk): Bill re-referred to Senate Appropriations Committee. Hearing scheduled for May 16, 2016. [READ MORE.](#)

AB 1713 (Eggman): Bill referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee Suspense File. [READ MORE.](#)

AB 2304 (Levine): Bill amended and re-referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee. [READ MORE.](#)

CAPITOL WEEKLY AND THE UC CENTER HOST THE WATER: 2016 CONFERENCE

As Californians live through a historic drought, Capitol Weekly and the UC Center presented **WATER: 2016**, their third annual conference devoted to California water policy. This day-long conference held on April 28, 2016, included discussions about groundwater rules, restrictions on water use, water storage and delivery, fiscal impacts of water projects, and political forces shaping policy. Below is a photo of Westlands Water District General Manager Tom Birmingham (middle) participating on the Water Storage and Delivery Panel.



RECLAMATION INCREASES FRIANT WATER SUPPLY ALLOCATION TO 65 PERCENT, CVP REMAINS AT 5

On May 6th, the Bureau of Reclamation announced an additional increase in the water supply allocation to the Friant Division contractors of their Class 1 water from 50 to 65 percent. The initial Friant Division water supply allocation announced on April 1st was 30 percent. The Class 1 water supply allocation increased from 30 to 40 percent on April 11th, and from 40 to 50 percent on April 21st, pursuant to prior notifications to Friant Division contractors. Central Valley Project water allocation remains at 5 percent while SWP and Friant Class I water users continue to rise.

[READ MORE.](#)

HEAVY RAIN CAUSES FLOODING AND PROBLEMS FOR VALLEY FARMERS

Earlier this month a heavy rainfall caused flooding in many Westside fields and created quite the challenge for some Central Valley growers. Westlands Water District told ABC 30 Action News rain is typically welcomed by farmers, except when it leaves this kind of aftermath.

Joe Del Bosque, a Central Valley farmer, said, "If you have crops growing, you don't want this kind of raining. A little rain, but this is a hard pounding rain that damages plants."

"If it comes in a harsh manner, as it has been reported in some areas, it can do some long term damage. And so, people may actually see that with a limited amount of food available, or possibly higher prices due to damage that may have occurred," said Gayle Holman, Westlands Water District Public Affairs Representative.

Over an inch of rain fell in nearly 30 minutes—washing out four of Del Bosque's melon fields and one of his cherry orchards.

Holman said the irony in all of this is that even with the amount of rain its farmers got they are still only receiving a five-percent water allocation from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

[READ MORE.](#)



In the Spotlight: Ryan Ferguson

Could you describe how you and your family started your farming business?

My family has been on the Westside in the Huron area for over 60 years. My grandparents started out in the custom harvesting business. My parents saw an opportunity to farm and have been farming for the past 25 years. About 12 years ago, my late wife and I had the opportunity to start our own family farm. Since then, my family has relied on good friends, the advice from others and community support to help us grow our farming business.



What do you grow on your farmland and how have you changed your production over the years?

When we have a more reliable water supply we grow: tomatoes, wheat, barley, chickpeas, processing onions, cantaloupe, watermelon, pistachios, almonds, and pima cotton. These days we grow tomatoes, processing onions, pistachios, almonds and seed contract cotton.

How has the lack of water impacted your business? Does the uncertainty around water supply impact your decision-making about investments in new equipment?

The lack of water has severely impacted my business. It makes it difficult to plan for next year's crop. If I knew I was going to get a manageable water supply next year I would invest heavily in irrigation infrastructure. I would be purchasing new farm equipment and could contribute a great deal of money back into the local economy. But the lack of water makes it difficult to retain the workforce needed to operate our total farmed acreages because we don't know how much ground will be fallowed next year until late winter or early spring. The federal government has changed the rules twice since I have been farming, and we never know what parameters they are going to operate the project under within their discretion. We are literally praying for a flood every year.

I have transitioned away from some row crops and into more permanent planting trees. They have been the only thing that we can afford to irrigate with surface water supplies.

Have you made long-term investments in your operation to improve water conservation and drainage?

When I started farming, we had no drip irrigation. We are currently 100% drip irrigated, and in fact we have a lot of fallowed drip beds. We invested our own capital to conserve water and improve the drainage issues. Our detractors have said that agriculture needs to conserve more and we will have enough water. Our irrigation systems are 95% efficient on water use. But we can't conserve when there is a 0% allocation—there is nothing to conserve.

If Congress and the federal government fail to fix the water supply system, even though water is available, what will happen to your farm and farming on the Westside?

If Congress fails to act with legislation, I fear that we are all buying time. The system is not manageable the way it has operated the last seven years. We had a normal-to-above-normal winter across the state yet we are getting a very meager allocation. I am very concerned about my future in farming on the Westside. I have three small children and I hope to one day farm on the Westside with them. But right now the future does not look bright, unless our elected officials enact some legislation to put the water supplies back in balance.

IMPORTANT NOTICES: Governor Brown Issues Order To Continue Water Savings As Drought Persists

Continued from page 2

The State Water Board will adjust emergency water conservation regulations through the end of January 2017, in recognition of the differing water supply conditions across the state, and develop proposed emergency water restrictions for 2017 if the drought persists.

Eliminate Water Waste

The State Water Board will permanently prohibit wasteful practices, such as hosing off sidewalks, driveways and other hardscapes, washing automobiles with hoses not equipped with a shut-off nozzle, and watering lawns in a manner that causes runoff. These temporary prohibitions have been in place since emergency water conservation efforts began in July 2014.

The State Water Board and DWR will take actions to minimize water system leaks across the state that continue to waste large amounts of water. DWR estimates that leaks in water district distribution systems siphon away more than 700,000 acre-feet of water a year in California - enough to supply 1.4 million homes for a year. Audits of water utilities have found an average loss through leaks of 10 percent of their total supply.

Strengthen Local Drought Resilience

In consultation with urban water suppliers, local governments, environmental groups and other partners, DWR will strengthen standards for local Water Shortage Contingency Plans, which are part of the Urban Water Management Plans that water districts must submit every five years. Under new strengthened standards, districts must plan for droughts lasting at least five years, as well as more frequent and severe periods of drought. These plans must be actionable, so that districts can turn to them to guide their drought response.

For areas not covered by the Water Shortage Contingency Plan, DWR will work with counties to improve drought planning for small water suppliers and rural communities.

Improve Agricultural Water Use Efficiency and Drought Planning

DWR will update existing requirements for Agricultural Water Management Plans so that irrigation districts quantify their customers' water use efficiency and plan for water supply shortages.

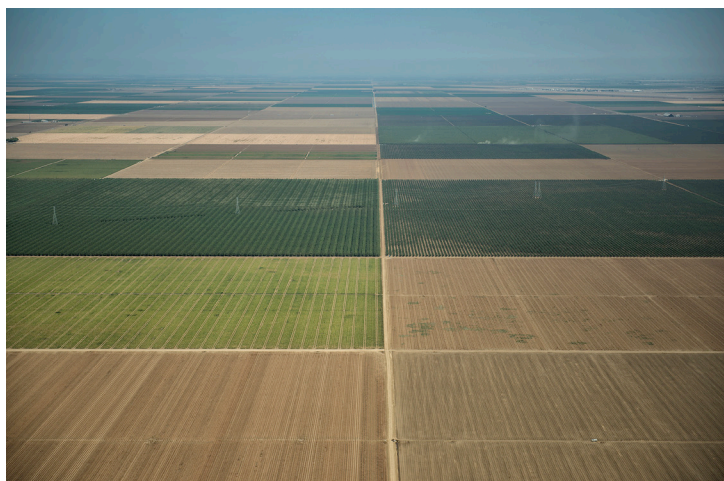
Current law requires agricultural water districts serving 25,000 acres or more to file such plans. The executive order increases the number of irrigation districts who must file water management plans by lowering the threshold to irrigation district serving 10,000 acres or more. DWR will check the plans to ensure they quantify conservation efforts and adequately plan for water shortages.

DWR will work with the California Department of Food and Agriculture in seeking public input on the updated standards, with a public draft made available by the end of this year.

To ensure compliance with these new targets and water management plan requirements, DWR, the State Water Board and the California Public Utilities Commission will work together to develop methods which could include technical and financial assistance, regulatory oversight and enforcement mechanisms.

The full text of the executive order can be found [here](#).

To learn more about the state's drought response, visit: [Drought.CA.Gov](#). Every Californian should take steps to conserve water. Find out how at [SaveOurWater.com](#).



Westlands Water District fallowed fields are visible next to planted fields, demonstrating the effects of an unreliable water supply.



The San Luis Canal brings precious water to farmland, communities and people in the Central and Southern part of our state.