



Water News

WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT

JULY 2016

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

Sacramento Legislation

As citizens of California, it is our hope that our State elected officials would be facilitators for positive changes to improve the lives of people in the Central Valley. In some cases, the Governor and the Legislature are working toward solutions that are intended to help. In other cases, state legislators from other parts of the state are pursuing legislation that will be harmful to San Joaquin Valley cities, farmers and the people who work in farm communities. Now that the State Legislature is on their summer break, here is a brief summary of our efforts in Sacramento:

With the proposal to build a Delta conveyance still in the development stage, Assembly Member Susan Eggman is pursuing legislation (AB 1713) to prohibit the construction of the project unless it is authorized by initiative. The bill is designed to stop any water infrastructure project that would provide more water to cities and farms throughout the state. **Westlands opposed the bill and the bill failed in the Senate Appropriations Committee.**

Another legislative proposal (AB 2087) by Assembly Member Marc Levine would grant the Department of Fish and Wildlife the authority to propose a regional water conservation framework. Farm groups and others raised concerns about this bill based on their belief that the conservation framework could impact local land use decisions. **Stakeholders are working to secure amendments that will address the land use issues. The bill is currently in the Senate Appropriations Committee and will be heard in August.**

Assembly Member Levine is also pursuing legislation (AB 2304) to require the Natural Resources Agency to create a centralized water market platform to provide ready access to information about water available for transfer or exchange and information about the process for transferring or exchanging water. **Concerns were raised about the creation of a new layer of bureaucracy over water transfers without any reform or improvement to the broken water system. The bill failed in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.**

Rather than repairing the broken state water infrastructure and allowing for replenishment of the ground water, SB 1307 (Wolk) limits groundwater extraction. The bill establishes a standard for "over-drafting" of groundwater

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IN THE NEWS

FISHERY DECISIONS COULD HELP, HARM WATER SUPPLIES

Ag Alert: New alternative strategies could protect fish whose populations drive water-allocation decisions for much of California.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

BE PROUD OF FARMERS, BIG AND SMALL

OC Register: Westlands grower Sarah Woolf says we should celebrate California's farming industry and everyone involved in it, from family operation to corporate growers.

[READ THE FULL OP-ED](#)

FEMA CONTRACTOR PREDICTS 'SOCIAL UNREST' CAUSED BY 395% FOOD PRICE SPIKES


Drudge Today: Food prices could rise by as much as 395% according to experts from the State Department, the World Bank, and Cargill.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

SURPRISING WAY CLIMATE CHANGE IS IMPACTING WATER

Water Deeply: Hydroclimatologist Bruce Daniels, Ph.D. helps Californians understand future water availability by examining 85 years of daily precipitation records.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

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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

JUL
19

WWD Board Meeting

AUG
16

WWD Board Meeting



What's New: Important Notices

Districts' Rescheduled Water Policy

Water users are reminded that the District's Rescheduled Water Policy provides that any loss of Rescheduled Water will be apportioned in the following order and manner (without regard to water type):

1. Any remaining Rescheduled Water in excess of the Acreage Based Cap which is 0.5 acre-feet per irrigable acre.
2. Water rescheduled by the District.
3. Remaining Rescheduled Water.
4. Delivered Rescheduled Water in excess of the Acreage Based Cap.
5. Delivered Rescheduled Water within the Acreage Based Cap.

Also of note, the policy states that for any water lost, water users shall pay all water costs that the District incurs (e.g., acquisition costs, purchase premiums, etc.), any applicable District rates, the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority O&M rate and Reclamation's rescheduling fee.

The District's Board of Directors has the authority to modify the District's Rescheduling Water Policy in order to respond to extraordinary circumstances or to be consistent with changes to Reclamation's Rescheduling Guidelines. The District's Policy for Rescheduled Water can be found on the District website [here](#).

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE Continued from page 1

and prohibits the issuance of a local permit for a new groundwater extraction facility, or requires the local government to set up a process to prove the facility will not have a negative impact. A long list of organizations opposed the legislation on the grounds that it interferes with the implementation of Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The bill died in the Assembly Local Government Committee.

Westlands Water District sponsored legislation, AB 2630 by Assembly Member Rudy Salas to encourage the construction of a transmission line in the San Joaquin Valley by requiring energy agencies to support electricity generated from San Joaquin Valley sources and the construction of necessary transmission upgrades. The bill passed the Senate Energy, Utilities, and Commerce Committee and will be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee in August.

The Westlands staff and lobbying team are working to protect the interest of the growers in the Westlands Water District and to create better policies that will support jobs and agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley cities.

If you have any questions or comments, contact me at jamaral@westlandswater.org.

Johnny Amaral
Deputy General Manager of External Affairs
Westlands Water District

In the Spotlight:

Tony Azevedo

Irrigation Leader featured Westlands grower Tony Azevedo and his family in their May Issue. Tony manages Stone Land Company, where he and his family grow everything from tomatoes, garlic, onions, cantaloupe, and pomegranates to pima cotton, pistachios, almonds, wheat, and chickpeas. "Tony is one of those creative and resilient farmers," says Westlands Deputy Manager Johnny Amaral in a commentary also featured in *Irrigation Leader*.

Water efficiency is a top priority for Stone Land. Mr. Azevedo considers efficient water use to be a critical element of his work. "This is our livelihood, and we need to be as efficient as we can," says Mr. Azevedo.

To read Mr. Amaral's full commentary on Westlands and growers Tony Azevedo and Sarah Woolf [click here](#). And be sure to check out *Irrigation Leader's* June Issue for more Westlands highlights.

We Are Westlands

Family farming for more than 60 years



Tony Azevedo and Family

Tony has managed Stone Land Company ever since his father-in-law Bill Stone handed him the reins in 2005. The family's hard work over the years has not only improved their land, but contributed to the local agricultural economy.



Westlands Files Lawsuit Against the Bureau of Reclamation

Last Friday, the San Luis Delta Mendota Water Authority (SLDMWA) and the Westlands Water District (WWD) filed a lawsuit in Federal District Court seeking a judicial ruling that the Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) failed to adequately analyze the effects of implementing Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives under the 2008 and 2009 Biological Opinions, as required by the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). SLDMWA and WWD filed the lawsuit to have the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) set aside as unlawful, with order for another EIS to be completed that addresses significant issues identified in the complaint.

The Bureau's failure to undertake the appropriate analysis led to improper and harmful adoption of a Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) regarding the operation of the Central Valley Project (CVP).

The lawsuit detailed several areas where the Bureau's analyses are deficient, including the following:

- The EIS fails to present a legitimate "no action alternative."
- The EIS fails to disclose that the water supply impacts under the Court's Biological Opinions (BiOps) would cause reductions in surface water supply, which in turn will impact future groundwater use.
- The EIS fails to properly evaluate the impact of the BiOps which resulted in a flawed conclusion that the BiOps will not cause significant impacts in agricultural areas, or significant socioeconomic impacts to communities in California, or cause significant environmental justice impacts in those communities.
- The Bureau fails to ensure that the modifications proposed by the BiOps were actually necessary to protect the fish species.

WESTLANDS FACT SHEETS

Westlands has prepared several new fact sheets to provide more information about the District and critical issues facing our growers. We are distributing these documents to elected officials, the media, and interested parties to provide our point of view and to refute the misinformation about the District and our farming operations. We will showcase these fact sheets in the Westlands monthly newsletter throughout this summer. Please let us know if you need copies of the fact sheets for events or meetings you are attending.

Fitch Removes Westlands Water District's Negative Watch Rating

We are pleased with **Fitch's decision** to affirm the rating of AA- and remove the negative watch rating based on the actions the District has taken to insure proper reporting in the future. The revised rating follows similar action by Standard & Poor's Rating Services which also removed its CreditWatch rating and affirmed its 'A+' long-term rating for Westlands Water District.

As a result of its analysis, Fitch also issued a negative outlook rating over additional drainage responsibility that Westlands will be required to manage under the drainage settlement reached between Westlands Water District and the United States Government. Westlands Water District looks forward to the enactment of the drainage legislation pending in Congress and to working with farmers and the Department of Interior to implement a program that fulfills the obligations contained within the agreement.





Water Conservation:

A Legacy of Adaptation. A Commitment to Stewardship and Innovation.

Throughout its history, Westlands Water District has recognized the long-term survival of its farms depend on the effective management of California's precious water resources.

CAREFUL APPROACH TO WATER DISTRIBUTION:

Successful water distribution systems must balance many factors: meeting the needs of thousands of uses simultaneously, with adequate water pressure at all locations and a thoughtful strategy to address water quality, quantity and peak flow rates. With its history of pervasive water shortages, Westlands Water District and its growers work together to ensure that every drop of water delivered through its comprehensive water supply system is responsibly and sustainably managed.

- The Westlands distribution system is fully enclosed to eliminate losses from evaporation and leakage. Today, more than 90 percent of Westlands irrigated lands are served by efficient drip irrigation systems, representing an investment of more than \$500 million.

EFFICIENCIES IN WATER USE:

Irrigated agriculture is essential in meeting our food and fiber production needs. Irrigation water management, which encourages the application of water in a manner that nourishes plants and crops without extended soil saturation or runoff, plays a crucial role in the conservation of water. By increasing application precision and reducing applications, water can be conserved and energy saved.

- Research shows that statewide between 1990 and 2010, flood irrigation dropped 24 percent, while the use of drip irrigation increased 23 percent. In Westlands, the use of water-saving initiatives such as precision drip irrigation, micro-sprinkler irrigation and regulated deficit irrigation has increased 55 percent over the last 30 years.
- Westlands offers an Expanded Irrigation System Improvement Program (EISIP), which provides low interest loans to water users for the lease-purchase of irrigation system equipment. EISIP funds up to \$130,000 towards the purchase of irrigation system equipment, design of irrigation system and purchase of portable aluminum irrigation pipe, micro irrigation, linear move and center pivots.

WHY FOCUS ON PRUDENT WATER MANAGEMENT?

Water is directed to Westlands through the Central Valley Project (CVP), which moves stored water from Lake Shasta to Bakersfield to the region through dams, canals and pumps. Under state and federal agreements, the CVP is intended to provide 90 percent of its water to farms, but in dry years, cities receive priority over farms. Environmental and drought restrictions also contribute to water shortages.

In the past ten years, Westlands received its full water allocation only once in 2006. Over the last five years, the district has received an average 10% allocation; two of those years, it received a zero allocation.



GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT:

The lack of consistent statewide policy surrounding groundwater management has exacerbated existing water supply problems resulting from minimal allocations and the drought. Over the last decade, some farmers have been forced to rely heavily on groundwater. Excessive pumping can result in long-term declines in groundwater supply, high pumping costs, sinking lands and dry wells.

- Westlands has taken a proactive approach to groundwater management that balances pumping rights with efforts to improve overall supply reliability and minimize total water supply costs. Through its Groundwater Management Program, Westlands became the first water district in the state to integrate local groundwater resources into the district's comprehensive water supply system. Westlands installs or acquires title to groundwater pumps, integrates them into its comprehensive water supply system, and provides groundwater pumping from under a fixed schedule.



PROMISING DESALINATION TECHNOLOGIES:

Former irrigation water can get trapped beneath the surface and prevent the water from draining lower into the underground and can cause environmental damage. Westlands Water District works with federal and state water officials on new initiatives for desalination, a process that removes minerals and contaminants from saline water.

- Cutting-edge desalination technologies have proven effective at processing drainage water at, in some cases, about half the cost of traditional desalination methods. At the **WaterFX** desalination plant near Firebaugh, farm drain water is heated by solar thermal energy and then cleaned. Westlands is also exploring a new process from researchers at Humboldt State University and the University of Southern California called Reverse Osmosis-Pressure Retarded Osmosis (RO-PRO), which captures and reuses salty drainage water on salt-tolerant plants before treating it.