



Water News

WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT

AUGUST 2016

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

We are not sitting down or standing still, we are making our concerns known and making the defenders of the status quo uncomfortable and angry by demonstrating the complete failure of government water policies.

Last week, more than 500 growers and a large group of agriculture and water organizations sent a letter to Congress describing the dire conditions that exist in California due to the failed government policies and lack of political leadership. The letter called on the President and Congress to act on a solution that will make water available for California communities and agriculture production.



We sent a bulletin to our elected officials showing that trillions of gallons of water are being held North of the Delta, while the San Luis Reservoir, as depicted in the photos here, has been reduced to a mud puddle, 10% of its capacity. We are demonstrating that even when water is available, the mismanaged system can't supply water to communities in need.



Several Westlands growers are offering their opinions about the failed government policies in California newspapers and on social media. They are challenging the regulators to explain the failure of the Central Valley Water Project.

We are encouraging more people to learn about state water policies and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter in order to provide information to a much larger audience about Westlands Water District and the failure of federal and state water policies.

We appreciate your help and advice, and over the next few months we will add to this effort as Congress and the State Legislature conclude their 2016 legislative sessions.

Johnny Amaral
Deputy General Manager of External Affairs
Westlands Water District

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We are now on Twitter!

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and join the conversation today.



IN THE NEWS

A TOUR OF CALIFORNIA'S WATER SUPPLY LAYS BARE THE TENSION BETWEEN FARMERS AND FISH

Los Angeles Times: Westlands staff provided LA Times reporter Robin Abcarian an aerial tour of California's water systems and key reservoirs. Here's her perspective of the experience summarized in today's article.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

CALIFORNIA PLANS TO FLUSH MORE WATER TO SEA TO SAVE DELTA SMELT

Breitbart: The State of California released a new plan to save the endangered Delta Smelt, which includes flushing up to 250,000 acre-feet of water into the Pacific Ocean.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

WE ARE THE 5 PERCENTERS, STRETCHING OUR WATER SUPPLIES TO GET BY

OC Register: Westside farmer Joe Del Bosque explains the impacts of a 5% allocation to farmers in the Central Valley.

[READ THE FULL OP-ED](#)

WHY HAVE WE FORSAKEN KENNEDY'S VISION FOR FEEDING THE WORLD?

Modesto Bee: JFK believed the San Luis Reservoir would help the Valley feed the world, yet certain environmental regulations are curtailing water deliveries that fill the reservoir.

[READ THE FULL OP-ED](#)

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CALENDAR

AUG
17

WWD Board Meeting

SEP
20

WWD Board Meeting

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.

What's New: Important Notices

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Update

The District's Board of Directors conducted two Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) formation hearings in Kings and Fresno Counties and subsequently voted to serve as the GSA for the proposed Westside Subbasin Boundary on July 19. Serving as the GSA will promote local management of our groundwater resources. The District could be deemed the exclusive GSA by December 2016. The next steps in the District's SGMA implementation are completing the hydrogeologic groundwater model and Interim Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) of the GSA management area. Please contact Kiti Campbell at (559) 241-6226 for additional information.

Fresno County AG Value Declines in 2015

According to the Fresno County Department of Agriculture's 2015 Crop and Livestock Report, agricultural production in Fresno County totaled \$6.61 billion, showing a 6.55 percent decrease from 2014's \$7.04 billion.

"The strength of Fresno County's agricultural industry is based upon the diversity of crops produced. This year's report covers nearly 400 commodities, of which, 62 exceed \$1 million in value," said Fresno County Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures Les Wright. "The lack of a reliable water supply continues to fallow productive land," Wright continued.

The annual crop report provides a chance to examine changes and trends in crop acreage and yields. Amounts in the report reflect the gross income values only (income before expenses) and does not reflect net return to producers.

"Every day, millions throughout the world are eating food that originated in Fresno County," said FCFB CEO Ryan Jacobsen. "The magnitude of this industry does not occur by happenstance. Generation upon generation of agricultural infrastructure has been built to feed an unbelievably productive, wholesome and affordable food supply." [READ MORE.](#)

For a copy of the full crop report, contact FCFB at 559-237-0263 or info@fcfb.org.



Westlands Water District is recruiting to fill two Electrician positions. The vacancies currently exist in our Electrical Department at our Five Points Field Office. Applications are being accepted beginning now through Friday, August 26, 2016. For more information please visit the Westlands website [HERE](#).

AG GROUP SENDS LETTER TO CALIFORNIA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

A statewide, comprehensive group of agricultural organizations and individual farmers sent a letter to the California Congressional Delegation asking for policy makers to take action on water reliability. The group includes the California Farm Bureau, which has 53 local chapters throughout the state, the Western Growers, the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), the California Cotton Growers Association, the California Cotton Ginners Association and the Western Agricultural Processors Association.

The letter acknowledges the critical conditions that exist in California and the need for Congressional and Executive action to solve the water supply crisis. With the future of the nation's agricultural production at risk, farmers, farmworkers, and supporting businesses throughout the state are calling on the California Delegation to work cooperatively to preserve a vital element of the California economy and the source of jobs for many California families. To read the letter, [CLICK HERE](#).

Boys and Girls Clubs 6th Annual Westside Luncheon at Harris Ranch

Earlier this summer, the Westside agricultural communities gathered for the Boys & Girls Clubs' 6th Annual Westside Luncheon at Harris Ranch. The event raised over \$92,000 for the Boys & Girls Clubs in Huron and Firebaugh as well as the new Harris Farms Boys & Girls Club located in central Huron. Westlands Water District is proud to support our Boys & Girls Clubs and continually invest in youth throughout our communities. Pictured here are Kristin Rojas, Assistant Executive Director, and Alex Garcia, long-time Unit Director, who the Club has been dedicated to for his service to Huron over the years.



Kings County Salute to AG Announces 2016 Honorees

The Lemoore Chamber of Commerce will host the 22nd Annual Jack Stone-Kings County Salute to Agriculture Banquet on Friday, September 9, 2016, at the Fialho Family Hangar in Lemoore. Gary Esajian has been named the 2016 Kings County Agriculturalist of the Year, and the family of the late Tony DeGroot will be presented a posthumous Lifetime Commitment to Kings County Agriculture Award. Golden State Farm Credit will receive the Ag Supporter of the Year.

Gary is a third generation farmer, starting with 80 acres in Western Kings County after college. "His family farming operation has steadily grown to one of the most productive farming operations in Kings County, if not all of California," says past honoree Craig Pedersen. Gary has served on the Westlands Water District Board of Directors, and has contributed to Kings County Ag for decades.

The late Tony DeGroot was a Hanford dairyman for decades, and died in a plane crash in 2015 at the age of 80. "He was taught as a child to always leave the world a better place than when he got here," says DeGroot's son, Tony DeGroot Jr. "Tony was an aggressive businessman and an eternal optimist focusing on the benefits of being in agriculture."

In addition to awarding this year's honorees, the evening will include a hosted social, hors d'oeuvres and dinner. The event will begin at 6:00p.m., dinner will be served at 7:00p.m., and the awards program will start at 8:00p.m.

For more information about the honorees, [CLICK HERE](#).

WESTLANDS AERIAL TOUR

Westlands Water District and the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority offer aerial and ground tours to local electeds, community stakeholders, and media to help key influencers gain a broader understanding of California's water systems including key reservoirs, Jones Pumping Plant, CA Aqueduct, Delta-Mendota Canal, State Water Project and Central Valley Project. Below are a few photos from a recent tour with the *Los Angeles Times*.



Renewable Energy: Setting a Course for the Future.

The Westlands Water District's geographic location is a plentiful source of natural sunlight, presenting a powerful opportunity to replace unproductive farmlands with renewable energy projects.

- In recent years, Westlands has designated retired lands for the production of solar energy, which is then sold into the California Electrical Grid for the benefit of the entities that contracted to purchase energy from the solar development. Since 2010, PG&E has completed several solar projects on land that has been deemed as drainage-impaired.
- Westlands is also home to a proposed state-of-the-art solar farm, the privately-owned Westlands Solar Park, which will be operating on 24,000 acres of retired farmland in the southeastern portion of the District. The project is expected to be completed by 2025 and will generate up to 2.4 gigawatts of solar power, greater energy potential than the combined output of several large nuclear power plants.



- Under the terms of a 2015 settlement between the United States Department of Justice and Westlands Water District, approximately 100,000 acres of land will be retired and made available for productive use, including additional solar energy park development and other productive uses.
- Westlands' focus on renewable energy also contributes to local cost efficiencies. Seawater desalination projects in Israel, Australia, and Carlsbad (Southern California) have all been costly; the cost of the Carlsbad project, which uses high-pressure reverse osmosis, is nearing \$1 billion. Westlands is working with a local company, [WaterFX](#), on a solar thermal desalination alternative that would produce five million gallons of water – at a much lower cost of just \$30 million.
- Certain sensitive lands, such as wildlife conservation areas, are not appropriate for energy development. Westlands will continue to exercise prudence in siting decisions in order to operate in an environmentally responsible manner.

Westlands Agriculture:

Fueling our Local Economies. Buoying the Statewide Economy.



The San Joaquin Valley ranks as one of the highest agricultural producers in the world. As the largest agricultural region in the state, Westlands growers produce a wide variety of crops. These agricultural contributions significantly impact the economies of local communities, the San Joaquin Valley, the State of California, and the nation.

- Westlands growers produce an average of more than \$1 billion worth of food and fiber every year, generating approximately \$3.5 billion in farm-related economic activities for surrounding communities. More than 50,000 people live and work in the communities dependent on Westlands' agricultural economy.
- Growers in the fertile Westlands district produce more than sixty high-quality food and fiber crops, including row crops, grapes and nut crops. Westlands farms lead the state in the production of six of California's top ten valued commodities.
- Over a third of the country's vegetables and two-thirds of the country's fruits and nuts are grown in California, and millions of dollars of agricultural products produced in the Westlands district are exported to more than 150 countries around the world. In 2014, the most recent year for which data is available, California's agricultural exports amounted to \$21.59 billion in value, representing 14.3 percent of total U.S. agricultural exports.
- Agriculture positively supports a broad cross section of California's business economy. A column in the *Los Angeles Times*¹ recently addressed the ripple effect and multipliers of agriculture to the state economy. In addition to contributing 2.1 percent of California's gross domestic product, agriculture impacts virtually every other industry sector in the state, including utilities, real estate, wholesale trade/retail trade, transportation and warehousing, and finance and insurance.
- A 2015 study from researchers at UC Davis, *The Economic Impact of Food and Beverage Processing in California*², found that the food and beverage processing sector is the third largest manufacturing sector in California, comprising 9.2% of the state's manufacturing value added and directly accounting for total-value added of \$82 billion and over 760,000 positions in direct jobs and employment impacts in 2012.

A DARKER LOOK AT THE ECONOMICS OF WATER LIMITATIONS:

- Adverse events in agriculture result in multiple adverse effects in the region's economy, impacting employment, population migration, and wage levels and even food prices, which disproportionately impact vulnerable communities. One of the most devastating of these adverse events is water limitation, both due to environmental limitations and the impact of California's multiyear drought on state water deliveries.
- A 2008 study from Berkeley Economic Consulting projected the impact of a proposed 40% reduction in water allocation in the Westlands Water District in 2009. The study suggested that limitations could result in tens of thousands of acres of fallowed farmland, farm income in the tens of millions of dollars, and hundreds of lost jobs. In reality, the 2009 impact was far worse. The California drought in 2009 resulted in an estimated 269,000 acres of cropland idled, \$368 million in lost farm revenues and total reduced economic output of \$796 million, according to a study from the University of California at Davis. Nearly 10,000 jobs were lost.
- A 2015 study by researchers at the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences and funded by the California Department of Food and Agriculture found that the drought was associated with \$1.84 billion in agricultural losses and up to 10,100 jobs in 2015. Limitations from the drought caused about 30 percent more losses in the workforce and out-of-production cropland.

1. Karen Ross and Daniel Sumner, "California agriculture: It's worth the water," *Los Angeles Times*, June 2, 2015.

2. Richard J. Sexton, Josué Medellín-Azuara, and Tina L. Saitone, "The Economic Impact of Food and Beverage Processing in California and Its Cities and Counties," Prepared for the California League of Food Processors, January 2015.