



Water News

WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT

NOVEMBER 2016

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

The Economic Impact of the Westlands Water District

George Washington once said, "Agriculture is the most healthful, most useful and most noble employment of man."

Some activists are peddling a narrative that agriculture uses too much water and does not produce a significant economic benefit to the state. To address this narrative we are fighting back with facts and real life realities. A [new report](#) commissioned by the Westlands Water District details the economic benefit of agriculture to the people in the Central Valley region and reviews the impact of restrictive water policies on consumers and businesses.


The report declares that agriculture is the dominant industry in the region and what happens to agriculture will impact everyone. In fact, the report states that in Fresno and Kings Counties "more than 60 percent of the largest private employers that are not hospitals are agriculture-related." Westlands alone is directly responsible for 21,000 jobs but indirectly responsible for an additional 8,000 jobs and for supporting businesses throughout the region, and the report draws astute attention to the induced effects because they "affect other entire sectors of the economy." When government policies harm farmers, the report shows that they are really harming California.

The study also shows government policies have already caused higher unemployment and taken land out of production. While the government is proposing even further restrictions, there is no transition plan. Rather than solving problems, government is creating major problems for the people in Fresno and Kings Counties. Rather than addressing higher unemployment and lower family income, government policies are contributing to the disparity, and rather than offering a plan to rejuvenate farming, government is pursuing land retirement and greater reliance on foreign food products.

We will be sharing this report with elected officials, national and state media, and business leaders in other parts of the state. Before it is too late, it is imperative that all parties involved understand the implications of current policies.

To read the full report, [click here](#).

Johnny Amaral
Deputy General Manager of External Affairs
Westlands Water District

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IN THE NEWS

WITHOUT WATER, THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY WITHERS

The Fresno Bee: Fresno County Board of Supervisors Chairman Buddy Mendes says government decisions that deny water is the biggest threat to residents in the San Joaquin Valley.

[READ THE FULL OP-ED](#)

WESTLANDS FARMERS MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO VALLEY ECONOMY, REPORT SAYS

Fresno Bee: A new report released highlights Westlands Water District's economic impacts to the Central Valley.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

NEW REPORT SLAMS VALLEY WATER SUPPLY RESTRICTIONS

The Fresno Business Journal: A new report concludes that California water supply restrictions are reducing farm production and negatively impacting communities dependent on agriculture.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

SAN FRANCISCO TO STATE ON WATER-USE CUTBACKS: HOW LOW CAN WE GO?

San Francisco Chronicle: San Francisco PUC says the State Water Resources Control Board's proposal to reduce water by 40% is too much.

[READ THE FULL OP-ED](#)

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CALENDAR

NOV
21

WWD Board Meeting

DEC
20

WWD Board Meeting

What's New: Important Notices

Rescheduled Monthly Board and Committee Meetings

The Board of Directors and Finance and Administration Committee Meetings have been rescheduled to Monday, November 21, 2016. The Finance and Administration Committee will convene at 10:00 a.m. and the Board of Directors will convene at 1:00 p.m., at the District's Fresno Office located at 3130 N. Fresno Street, Fresno, California.

Please note the above meetings were previously scheduled for November 15, 2016 and have been moved to Monday, November 21, 2016. The Water Policy Committee met on Wednesday, November 16th at 1:00 p.m.

Upcoming Holiday Office Closures

As a reminder, the District offices will be closed on Thursday, November 24, 2016 and Friday, November 25, 2016 for the Thanksgiving Holiday.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

Paul Betancourt

Irrigation Leader recently featured Westlands grower Paul Betancourt and his work in the local community in their October Issue. The Betancourt family farms 765 acres, which includes 125 acres of almonds and 640 acres of field crops. Depending on the year and the marketplace, Betancourt has farmed on the 640 acres barley, wheat, cantaloupes, and both Acala and American-Pima cotton.

Paul is an active member in the local agricultural community. His civic interests include service on several boards – the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Kerman Unified School Board, as well as a long-time member of the Kerman Rotary Board and the Fresno County Farm Bureau Board, where he served as President from 2000 to 2002.

The publication's October Issue also featured an interview with Johnny Amaral, Deputy General Manager for Westlands Water District, and *Irrigation Leader's* Editor-in-Chief Kris Polly about creating lasting water solutions to address California's critical water storage and delivery issues.

Check out *Irrigation Leader's* full October Issue [HERE](#).

We Are Westlands

Westlands Growers Help Grow our Communities



Paul Betancourt

Paul Betancourt contributes more than just his field crops to the Central Valley's agricultural economy, he also donates his time to the local community. His civic interests include service on several boards – the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Kerman Unified School Board, as well as a long-time member of the Kerman Rotary Board and the Fresno County Farm Bureau Board, where he served as President from 2000 to 2002.





Economic Impacts of the Westlands Water District on the Local and Regional Economy

As farmworkers, cities and communities in the Central Valley continue to feel the negative implications of restrictive water policy, it is critical to remember the contributions the region has as one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world.

WESTLANDS ALONE IS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR MASSIVE ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS:

29,000 jobs
throughout the economy

\$3.6 billion of economic activity
across the region, state and nation

WATER SUPPLY RESTRICTIONS HAVE RESULTED IN:



5,200 job losses
or 18% employment loss in the region

\$650 million
of economic output

220,000 acres
of farmland taken out of production

FARMING SERVES AS ECONOMIC DRIVER FOR THIS REGION:



\$1.8 billion
crop value



More than
351,000 acres
of farms

POVERTY IS AN ISSUE FOR SIGNIFICANT PORTIONS OF THE REGION:

Household incomes are:

75%
of the statewide median household income

\$45,201
regionally compared to
\$61,489 statewide median household income



MORE THAN HALF OF THE REGION IS OF HISPANIC ETHNICITY, RESULTING IN SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS TO THIS POPULATION:

50.4%
of the region is Hispanic

By 2060, the Hispanic population is expected to grow to more than
60%



Westlands Water District