Why Water Matters:

The Importance of Westlands Water District to California and Its Economy

A new study by Dr. Michael A. Shires highlights the impact of agricultural operations within Westlands Water District on the local and regional economies and the wide-reaching consequences of water restrictions on farms, local communities, and the nation's food supply.

A Major Economic Engine

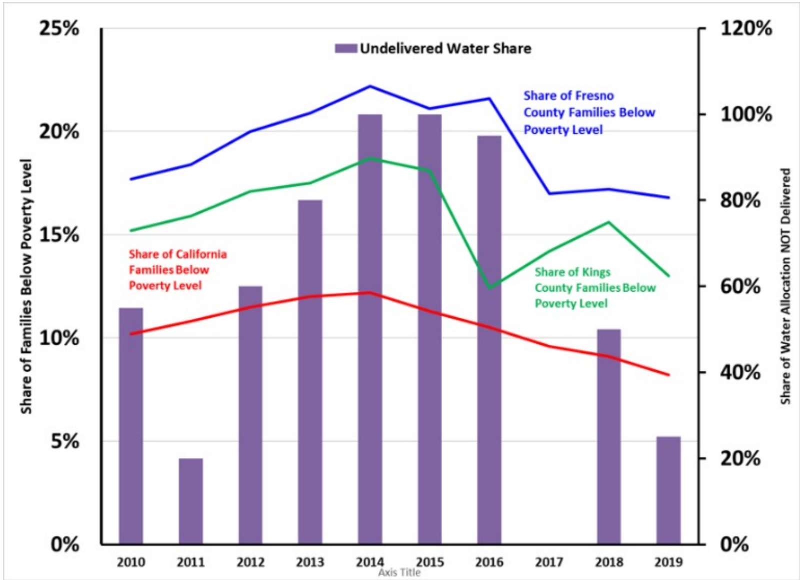
On an annual basis, agricultural production within Westlands:

- Generates over ***$4.7 billion*** in economic activity
- Supports ***35,115 jobs*** across the regional economy
- Produces ***wages, tax revenues***, and ***consumer spending***

The Impact of Water

A "striking" correlation between water supply and poverty in Fresno and Kings Counties:

- When WWD receives little to no water, ***poverty levels increase***
- When WWD receives a higher water allocation, ***economic stability improves***



Water availability is critical to production and value added. A decrease in water supply means higher expenses, increased fallowing, and more highly productive land left unplanted, resulting in a significant decline of economic output. ***An analysis comparing 2019 fallowing levels with years of higher CVP water allocation shows an 18% decline in employment and economic activity.***

National Footprint & Uncertainties

- The combination of weather and soil conditions of the District are unique, which is why Westlands farmers are able to supply ***3.5% of the country's fruit and nut crops*** and ***5.4% of the country's vegetables and melons.***
- Growers in Westlands continue to be a key national resource for ***a quality and safe food supply.***
- Agricultural production in the Central Valley is critical to meeting the food supply and food security needs of the United States. ***There is no domestic alternative that can replace the Central Valley's production of these critical products.***
- Today's economic chaos creates more uncertainties that reverberate across the agriculture industry in Westlands and the country:
  - o **Changing precipitation patterns** necessitate planning ahead.
  - o **Supply chain disruptions** make domestic production more critical.
  - o **Labor market shifts and government policies** have directly disrupted labor markets.
  - o **The COVID-19 pandemic** has amplified and accelerated these disruptions.

Westlands Water District

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