



Water News

WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT

APRIL 2017

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

The time has come to get the Drainage bill across the finish line


With the [Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act](#) (WINN Act) in place to improve the operations of the Central Valley Project, a 100% allocation for 2017 (late but still a welcome change), and new water supply legislation introduced in the House this year to further improve CVP operations and water supply, there's a lot to look forward to. Westlands Water District (District) is also looking forward to the enactment of pending legislation (H.R. 1769, San Luis Unit Drainage Resolution Act) by Congressman David Valadao that will implement the Drainage Settlement between the District and the United States. Similar legislation was introduced in 2015, received a hearing and a markup in the House, but time ran out for passage of the legislation.

Now, the timing is right to complete the process and secure legislative ratification of the Settlement. The legislation has bi-partisan support in the House of Representatives, and we are encouraged by Senator Feinstein's comments that the "process has been going on for more than 20 years and needs to be solved. Both Westlands and the Interior Department know this, which is why they reached an agreement."

H.R. 1769 contains critical provisions that resolves decades of costly litigation, provides a path forward for reuse of the damaged land, requires the District to manage drainage in the future, and compensates Westlands' growers and the District for the losses that occurred because of the federal government's failure to construct a drainage system. The bill was referred to the Natural Resources Committee, Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans.

The District will be reaching out to a variety of organizations, providing information about the settlement and the legislation. Our education efforts will utilize District documents that describe the legislation and the benefits of

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and join the conversation today.



IN THE NEWS

CALIFORNIA WATER ALLOCATIONS HIT 100 PERCENT – HERE'S WHY FARMERS ARE STILL MIFFED

Sacramento Bee: Late announcements ignore logistics of farming, planting decisions were made months ago.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

FULL WATER ALLOCATION TOO LATE FOR SOME CALIF. FARMERS

Courthouse News Service:

Decision to allocate 100% should have come sooner.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

WEST SIDE HAS FULL WATER SUPPLIES FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 2006

The Modesto Bee: Full water deliveries restored to districts that had been cut back because of drought and fish protections.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

CENTRAL VALLEY FARMERS RECEIVE FIRST FULL WATER ALLOCATION SINCE 2006

Valley Public Radio: Good news, but late in the growing season.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

WESTSIDE WATER SUPPLY UPPED TO 100 PERCENT

Hanford Valley Sentinel: Valley leaders call for improved water infrastructure.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

CONTACT US

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CALENDAR

MAY
16

WWD Board Meeting

JUN
20

WWD Board Meeting

What's New: Important Notices

schaney@bgclubfc.org or fax to (559) 266-0664. All Proceeds Benefit the Huron & Firebaugh Boys & Girls Clubs'."/>

Save the Date
for the
**7TH ANNUAL
WEST SIDE LUNCHEON FUNDRAISER**
Thursday, May 25th
11:30-1:00 p.m.
Harris Ranch Restaurant
24505 W Dorris Ave, Coalinga, CA

If you would like to be a table sponsor, purchase tickets, or receive details regarding the Luncheon, please call (559) 266-3117. You can also email your request to schaney@bgclubfc.org or fax to (559) 266-0664.

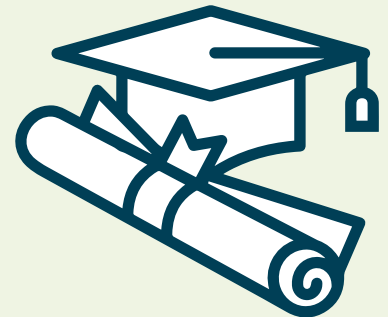
All Proceeds Benefit the Huron & Firebaugh Boys & Girls Clubs

7th Annual Westside Luncheon for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Fresno County

Tickets are still available for the 7th annual Boys & Girls Clubs of Fresno County Westside Luncheon, May 25th at Harris Ranch! All event proceeds will fund education and leadership programs at the Huron and Firebaugh clubs. For more information on sponsor opportunities or to purchase a table, contact Sandra Dee Chaney at (559) 266-3117 or schaney@bgclubfc.org.

Westlands Scholarship Information – Application Deadline is Friday, May 12, 2017

Westlands Water District is pleased to offer annually to college-bound seniors a scholarship program that recognizes and rewards exceptional academic achievement and leadership by graduating seniors at area high schools. Scholarships are awarded to local west side high schools at the following schools: Coalinga, Firebaugh, Lemoore, Mendota, Riverdale and Tranquillity. Applications and all supporting documents are due in the Fresno District Office by Friday, May 12, 2017. Each winner receives a \$1,000 scholarship award. For an application and list of instructions, please contact the public affairs office at (559) 241-6233.



Listen In for more details on the scholarship process.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

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the settlement and the Department of Interior's summary of the Settlement and how it benefits taxpayers ([available here](#)).

We anticipate that anti-farming legislators and activist groups will oppose H.R. 1769, as they oppose anything that benefits farm communities in the Central Valley. The District staff will continue to knock down the misrepresentations that opponents have unsuccessfully used in the past to discredit the settlement. We will emphasize that the settlement was negotiated and supported by the Obama Administration, enjoys bi-partisan support, resolves litigation that Senator Feinstein and other federal and state officials described as problematic, and has the support of the Trump Administration.

With a new President and Congress, the timing is right for passage of H.R. 1769. Please contact me if you have any questions about the legislation.

Johnny Amaral
Deputy General Manager of External Affairs
Westlands Water District

Westlands' Annual Water Users' Workshop

Westlands recently held its annual water users' workshop at the Five Points Field Office location. The annual workshop is an opportunity to discuss issues of importance with our growers. Staff presented information concerning water supply outlook, CVP allocation, transfers, rescheduled water, adopted budget and water rates, groundwater conditions and more.



Westlands is Hiring!

Job Opening – Buyer Position

Westlands Water District is currently recruiting to fill one upcoming vacancy for a Buyer position in the Procurement and Fleet Services Department at the Fresno Office. Applications are being accepted through Monday, April 24, 2017. The Notice of Job Opening and Supplemental Application for this position can be found on our website [here](#).



Westlands Water District

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WESTLANDS' FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE WEEKLY REPORT ON CALIFORNIA'S BROKEN WATER SYSTEM

April 14, 2017

NRDC's Own Facts



Westlands Water District strongly believes discussions related to the resolution of important water policy issues should be based on facts. It is for that reason that Westlands recently acknowledged, “because of the extremely wet hydrology, the ESA and other regulations have not restricted CVP operations in 2017.” In his recent “Expert Blog,” Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) Attorney, Doug Obegi, seized on this “admission” as evidence that “some irrigation districts and special interest groups representing corporate agribusinesses are twisting the facts to complain about the federal Central Valley Project’s “mere” allocation of [65% for south-of-Delta Central Valley Project agricultural water service contractors.]” The great irony is that it is Mr. Obegi who is twisting the facts.

Immediately after quoting Westlands’ “admission,” Mr. Obegi asserts “[i]n the past few years, protections for Delta Smelt have had little to no impact on water supply, as drought was the overwhelming cause of reductions in water supply (protections for endangered salmon have had some impacts on supply, but even those impacts were small compared to hydrologic changes).” Mr. Obegi’s statement is demonstrably false.

In terms of California’s hydrologic record, 2016 was an average water year, but south-of-Delta CVP agricultural water service contractors received a 5% allocation. A major factor causing this low allocation was pumping reductions at the C. W. “Bill” Jones Pumping Plant imposed under the 2008 biological opinion for the protection of the Delta smelt. But do not take Westlands’ word for it; instead, review the “change orders” transmitted by the Bureau of Reclamation to the operator of the Jones Pumping Plant directing that pumping be reduced to protect the Delta smelt. Those change orders, which are public documents available to Mr. Obegi, are posted on Westlands’ web page at: <http://wwd.ca.gov/about-westlands/blog/>.

Westlands estimates that during the 2016 water year, the water supply costs to the CVP resulting from reduced pumping under the Delta smelt biological opinion was approximately 252,000 acre-feet compared to operations under Water Rights Decision 1641, the order adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board to protect water quality, fisheries, and public trust resources in the Delta. (For the CVP and State Water Project, the combined loss of water was approximately 820,000 acre-feet.)

Mr. Obegi's assertion that "protections for endangered salmon have had some impacts on supply, but even those impacts were small compared to hydrologic changes" is also demonstrably false.

On April 30, 2016, storage in Shasta Reservoir was 4.233 million acre-feet (MAF), relatively good hydrologic conditions compared to the historical record. For comparison, end-of-April storage at Shasta in 2015 was 2.662 MAF. Total inflow into Shasta Reservoir in the 2016 water year was 5.335 MAF, or 107% of the 15 year average, compared to 3.602 MAF in 2015. In the spring of 2016, because of those good hydrologic conditions Reclamation forecasted that after pumping restrictions under the Delta smelt biological opinion and the 2009 salmonid biological opinion were lifted on June 30, it would be able to operate the Jones Pumping Plant at capacity for the remainder of the water year by making releases from relatively abundant storage in Shasta Reservoir. But Reclamation's plan to operate the Jones Pumping Plant at capacity after June 30 was frustrated because the National Marine Fisheries Service implemented a provision of the 2009 salmonid biological opinion to limit releases from Shasta Reservoir to protect winter run Chinook salmon.

When the 2016 water year ended, on September 30, 2016, storage in Shasta Reservoir was 2.811 MAF, compared to 1.603 MAF in storage on September 30, 2015. A very conservative estimate of additional water that could have been delivered to the San Joaquin Valley, but for the limitations imposed on releases from Shasta Reservoir under the salmonid biological opinion, is 300,000 acre-feet.

So, in 2016, the Delta smelt biological opinion and the salmonid biological opinion combined to reduce south-of-Delta CVP water supplies by approximately 552,000 acre-feet. That is equivalent to an additional 30% allocation for south-of-Delta CVP agricultural water service contractors.

Had Mr. Obegi, limited his comment to the 2014 and 2015 water years, it would have been accurate. In those years, extraordinarily dry conditions overwhelmed impacts caused by pumping restrictions under the two biological opinions. But Mr. Obegi did not limit his comment to those water years. Instead, he said in the "past few years," which ignores water supply impacts in the most recent water year, 2016. And with the exception of 2011, another exceptionally wet year, and 2014 and 2015, exceptionally dry years, the 2008 and 2009 biological opinions have caused significant reductions in water supplies for south-of-Delta CVP agricultural water service contractors in each year of their implementation.

The late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan is reported to have said, "[e]veryone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts." Mr. Obegi and his colleagues do a disservice to the public when they persist in ignoring this aphorism. One additional overriding fact Mr. Obegi and his colleagues continue to ignore – the laws and policies that NRDC has promoted and supported over the past 25 years have failed. They have failed the people of California, school districts, communities, farmworkers, small business owners, and farmers. And, unfortunately, they have failed the fish and wildlife that the NRDC claims to want to save.

It's time for honesty in the very worthwhile debate about how YOUR water is being prioritized.