

## **NOTICE AND AGENDA**

Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

**SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1**

will be held at **3:00 P.M., Tuesday, January 21, 2025**

**1070 Faraday Street, Santa Ynez, CA - Conference Room**

**Notice Regarding Public Participation:** For those who may not attend the meeting but wish to provide public comment on an Agenda Item, please submit any and all comments and written materials to the District via electronic mail at [general@syrwd.org](mailto:general@syrwd.org). All submittals should indicate **"January 21, 2025 Board Meeting"** in the subject line. Materials received by the District during and prior to the meeting will become part of the post-meeting Board packet materials available to the public and posted on the District's website.

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **REPORT BY THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD REGARDING COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR POSTING OF THE NOTICE AND AGENDA**
4. **ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS, IF ANY, TO THE AGENDA**
5. **PUBLIC COMMENT** - Any member of the public may address the Board relating to any non-Agenda matter within the District's jurisdiction. The total time for all public participation shall not exceed fifteen (15) minutes and the time allotted for each individual shall not exceed three (3) minutes. The District is not responsible for the content or accuracy of statements made by members of the public. No action will be taken by the Board on any public comment item.
6. **CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 17, 2024**
7. **CONSENT AGENDA** - All items listed on the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine and will be approved or rejected in a single motion without separate discussion. Any item placed on the Consent Agenda can be removed and placed on the Regular Agenda for discussion and possible action upon the request of any Trustee.
  - CA-1. Water Supply and Production Report
  - CA-2. Central Coast Water Authority Update
8. **MANAGER REPORTS - STATUS, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:**
  - A. **DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION**
    1. Financial Report on Administrative Matters
      - a) Presentation of Monthly Financial Statements - Revenues and Expenses
      - b) Approval of Accounts Payable
    2. Personnel Policy Manual
      - a) Resolution No. 850: A Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 Amending the District's Personnel Policy Manual
  - B. **OPERATIONS**
    1. General Updates
9. **REPORT, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:**
  - A. **SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT**
    1. Eastern Management Area (EMA) Update

10. **REPORTS BY THE BOARD MEMBERS OR STAFF, QUESTIONS OF STAFF, STATUS REPORTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMITTEE REPORTS, AND OTHER MATTERS AND/OR COMMUNICATIONS NOT REQUIRING BOARD ACTION**
11. **CORRESPONDENCE: GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FILING OF VARIOUS ITEMS**
12. **REQUESTS FOR ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING AGENDA:** Any member of the Board of Trustees may request to place an item on the Agenda for the next regular meeting. Any member of the public may submit a written request to the General Manager of the District to place an item on a future meeting Agenda, provided that the General Manager and the Board of Trustees retain sole discretion to determine which items to include on meeting Agendas.
13. **NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for **February 18, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.**
14. **CLOSED SESSION:**

The Board will hold a closed session to discuss the following items:

  - A. **CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - EXISTING LITIGATION**  
[Subdivision (d)(1) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code – 2 Cases]
    1. Name of Case: Adjudicatory proceedings pending before the State Water Resources Control Board regarding Permit 15878 issued on Application 22423 to the City of Solvang, Petitions for Change, and Related Protests
    2. Name of Case: Central Coast Water Authority, et al. v. Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, et al., Santa Barbara County Superior Court Case No. 21CV02432
  - B. **CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - POTENTIAL LITIGATION**  
[Subdivision (d)(4) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code – Potential Initiation of Litigation By the Agency – One Matter]
15. **RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION:**  
[Sections 54957.1 and 54957.7 of the Government Code]
  - A. Report (if any) on Closed Session Agenda Items 14.A – 14.B
16. **ADJOURNMENT**

---

This Agenda was posted at 3622 Sagunto Street, Santa Ynez, California, and notice was delivered in accordance with Government Code Section 54950 et seq., specifically Section 54956. This Agenda contains a brief general description of each item to be considered. The Board reserves the right to change the order in which items are heard. Copies of any staff reports or other written documentation relating to each item of business on the Agenda are on file with the District and available for public inspection during normal business hours at 3622 Sagunto Street, Santa Ynez. Such written materials will also be made available on the District's website, subject to staff's ability to post the documents before the regularly scheduled meeting. Questions concerning any of the Agenda items may be directed to the District's General Manager at (805) 688-6015. If a court challenge is brought against any of the Board's decisions related to the Agenda items above, the challenge may be limited to those issues raised by the challenger or someone else during the public meeting or in written correspondence to the District prior to or during the public meeting. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any individual needing special assistance to review Agenda materials or participate in this meeting may contact the District Secretary at (805) 688-6015. Notification 72 hours prior to the meeting will best enable the District to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT,  
 IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1  
DECEMBER 17, 2024 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 17, 2024, in-person at 1070 Faraday Street.

Trustees Present:            Jeff Clay  
    Mike Burchardi  
    Brad Joos  
    Nick Urton

Trustees Absent:            Mark Moniot

Others Present:            Paeter Garcia      Racel Cota      Karen King  
    Dan Drugan      Jessica Diaz      Kylie Kelleher  
    Randy Murphy

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:

President Clay called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m., he stated that this was a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees. Ms. Cota conducted a roll call and reported that all Trustees were present, with Trustee Moniot absent.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

President Clay led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. REPORT BY THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD REGARDING COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR POSTING OF THE NOTICE AND AGENDA:

Ms. Cota reported that the Agenda for this meeting was posted in accordance with the California Government Code commencing at Section 54953, as well as District Resolution No. 340.

4. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS, IF ANY, TO THE AGENDA:

There were no additions or corrections to the Agenda.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT:

President Clay welcomed any members of the public and offered time for members of the public to speak and address the Board on matters not on the Agenda. There was no public comment. Mr. Garcia reported that no written comments were submitted to the District for the meeting.

6. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 19, 2024:

The Regular Meeting minutes from November 19, 2024 were presented for consideration.

President Clay asked if there were any changes or additions to the Regular meeting minutes of November 19, 2024. There were no changes or additions requested.

It was MOVED by Trustee Joos, seconded by Trustee Burchardi, and carried by a unanimous 4-0-0 voice vote with Trustee Moniot absent, to approve the November 19, 2024 Regular meeting minutes as presented.

1 7. CONSENT AGENDA:

2 The Consent Agenda report was provided in the Board packet.

3  
4 Mr. Garcia reviewed the Consent Agenda materials for the month of November.

5  
6 It was MOVED by Trustee Joos, seconded by Trustee Urton, and carried by a unanimous 4-0-0  
7 voice vote with Trustee Moniot absent, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

8  
9 8. MANAGER REPORTS - STATUS, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING  
10 SUBJECTS:

11  
12 A. DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

13  
14 1. Board of Trustees Designations

15 a) Certified Appointments In Lieu of Election

16 The board packet included a November 12, 2024 letter from the Santa Barbara County  
17 Clerk, Recorder and Assessor Elections Division regarding the November 5, 2024  
18 Election Results.

19  
20 Mr. Garcia reported that on November 12, 2024, the Santa Barbara County Board of  
21 Supervisors appointed in-lieu of an election Mark Moniot, Trustee Division 1 and  
22 Michael Burchardi, Trustee Division 4 as qualified candidates to the District's Board of  
23 Trustees. Mr. Garcia announced that the four-year terms run from December 6, 2024  
24 through December 1, 2028.

25  
26 b) Selection of Officers of the Board – President, Vice President, Treasurer & Secretary

27 Mr. Garcia reported that each December the District's Board selects the positions of  
28 President, Vice President, and Treasurer and Secretary to the Board of Trustees. He  
29 explained that the process for selecting officers is based on nominations and votes by  
30 the Board members.

31  
32 President Clay reviewed the current positions and called for nominations from the  
33 Board. Trustee Burchardi suggested that the positions remain unchanged. The Board  
34 concurred with Trustee Burchardi, and the nominations were closed.

35  
36 It was Moved by Trustee Burchardi, seconded by Trustee Urton, and carried by a 4-0-  
37 0 voice vote, with Trustee Moniot absent, to select Trustee Clay as President, Trustee  
38 Burchardi as Vice President, and Racel Cota as Treasurer and Secretary to the Board of  
39 Trustees.

40  
41 c) Appointment of Representatives to Participating Agencies and Organizations –  
42 Central Coast Water Authority (CCWA) Association of California Water Agencies  
43 (ACWA), and Eastern Management Area, Groundwater Sustainability Agency (EMA  
44 GSA).

45 President Clay reviewed the current Board representatives to participating agencies  
46 and organizations. Discussion ensued regarding the current agency and organization  
47 appointments. Trustee Urton indicated his interest as the Alternate for CCWA and  
48 Trustee Clay stated his interest as the Director. President Clay stated his interest in  
49 remaining the Director for ACWA while Mr. Garcia stated his willingness to continue  
50 as the Alternate. Trustee Joos stated his interest as the Director of the EMA GSA with  
51 Trustee Burchardi as the Alternate.



1 It was **MOVED** by Trustee Urton, seconded by President Clay, and carried by a 4-0-0  
2 roll call vote, with Trustee Moniot absent, to appoint Trustee Clay and Trustee Urton  
3 as Director and Alternate, respectively, to the Central Coast Water Authority Board of  
4 Directors, to appoint Trustee Clay and Paeter Garcia as Representative and Alternate,  
5 respectively, to the Association of California Water Agencies, and to appoint Trustee  
6 Joos and Trustee Burchardi as Director and Alternate, respectively, to the Eastern  
7 Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency..  
8

9 d) Appointment of Board Committees

10 President Clay reviewed the current Board representative for the Ad Hoc Committees.  
11 He identified each Ad Hoc Committee, which included Trustee Urton and Trustee  
12 Joos - City of Solvang; Trustee Burchardi and Trustee Joos - Water Rates; Trustee  
13 Burchardi and Trustee Joos - Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board (COMB);  
14 Trustee Burchardi and Trustee Urton - Cachuma Contract; and Trustee Burchardi and  
15 Clay - Los Olivos Community Services District (Los Olivos CSD).  
16

17 Discussion ensued regarding each of the Ad Hoc Committees, and potential new  
18 appointments to the Solvang and Los Olivos CSD Committees. Trustee Moniot was  
19 discussed as a candidate for the Los Olivos CSD Ad Hoc Committee based on his  
20 residency in Los Olivos and ongoing interest in Los Olivos CSD issues.  
21

22 It was **MOVED** by Trustee Joos, seconded by Trustee Burchardi, and carried by a 4-0-  
23 0 roll call vote, with Trustee Moniot absent, to appoint Trustee Urton and Trustee Joos  
24 to the City of Solvang Ad Hoc Committee; Trustee Burchardi and Trustee Joos to the  
25 Water Rates Ad Hoc Committee; Trustee Burchardi and Trustee Joos to the COMB Ad  
26 Hoc Committee; Trustee Burchardi and Trustee Urton to the Cachuma Contract Ad  
27 Hoc Committee; and Trustee Burchardi and Trustee Moniot to the Los Olivos CSD Ad  
28 Hoc Committee.  
29

30 2. Financial Report on Administrative Matters

31 a) Presentation of Monthly Financial Statements - Revenues and Expenses

32 Ms. Cota announced that the Financial Statements were provided to the Board via  
33 email earlier in the day, included in the meeting handout materials, and posted on the  
34 District's website.  
35

36 Ms. Cota reviewed the Statement of Revenues and Expenses for the month of  
37 November. She highlighted various line-items related to revenue and expense  
38 transactions that occurred during the month and referred to the Fiscal-Year-to-Date  
39 Statement of Revenues and Expenses that provides a budget to actual snapshot for the  
40 first quarter of the fiscal year. Ms. Cota stated that revenue exceeded expenses by  
41 \$339,628.97 and the year-to-date November 2024 net income was \$2,482,362.56.  
42

43 b) Approval of Accounts Payable

44 Ms. Cota announced that the Warrant List was provided to the Board via email earlier  
45 in the day, included in the meeting handout materials, and posted on the District's  
46 website.  
47

48 The Board reviewed the Warrant List which covered warrants 26258 through 26316 in  
49 the amount of \$544,358.80.  
50

1 It was **MOVED** by Trustee Burchardi, seconded by Trustee Joos, and carried by a  
2 unanimous 4-0-0 voice vote with Trustee Moniot absent, to approve the Warrant List  
3 for November 20, 2024 through December 17, 2024.  
4

5 3. Amendment to Rules & Regulations and Capital Facilities Charges

- 6 a) Resolution No. 848: A Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River  
7 Water Conservation District, Improvement No.1 Approving the Automatic Annual  
8 Adjustments to the Capital Facilities Charges and Meter Installation Fees Contained  
9 in Appendix "C" and Appendix "D" of the District's Rules and Regulations  
10

11 The Board packet included a December 17, 2024 Staff Report and Resolution No. 848  
12 with related appendices.  
13

14 Mr. Garcia explained that Resolution No. 848 amends Appendix "C" and Appendix  
15 "D" of the District's Rules and Regulations relating to the District's Capital Facilities  
16 Charges and related costs under Section 603 and 709 of the District's Rules and  
17 Regulations. He stated that Resolution No. 848 was presented in draft form to the Board  
18 of Trustees at the November Meeting. Mr. Garcia reviewed the calculations used to  
19 establish the 2025 Capital Facilities Charges, how the 2025 charges compare to the 2024  
20 charges, and recommended approval of Resolution No. 848 for the automatic annual  
21 adjustment to the District's Capital Facilities Charges and meter installation fees  
22 effective January 1, 2025 pursuant to Sections 603 and 709 of the District Rules and  
23 Regulations.  
24

25 It was **MOVED** by Trustee Joos, seconded by Trustee Urton to approve and adopt  
26 Resolution No. 848. The Motion carried and Resolution No. 848 was adopted by  
27 the following 4-0-0 roll call vote, with Trustee Moniot absent:  
28

29 **Ayes, Trustees:** Brad Joos  
30 Mike Burchardi  
31 Nick Urton  
32 Jeff Clay  
33

34 **Noes, Trustees:** None  
35 **Abstain, Trustees:** None  
36 **Absent, Trustees:** Mark Moniot  
37

38 4. District Land and Air Space

- 39 b) Resolution No. 849: A Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River  
40 Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 Concerning Inventory of  
41 District Land and Air Space  
42

43 The Board packet included Draft Resolution No. 840 and supporting documentation.  
44

45 Mr. Garcia stated that pursuant to Section 50569 of the California Government Code,  
46 the District must inventory its land and air space on an annual basis to determine if  
47 any surplus land exists. He stated that based on the inventory, no District lands are  
48 deemed surplus to the District's current and foreseeable needs and recommended  
49 approval of Resolution No. 849 as presented.  
50

1 It was **MOVED** by Trustee Burchardi, seconded by Trustee Urton to approve and  
2 adopt Resolution No. 849. The Motion carried and Resolution No. 849 was adopted  
3 by the following 4-0-0 roll call vote, with Trustee Moniot absent:

4  
5 **Ayes, Trustees:** Brad Joos  
6 Mike Burchardi  
7 Nick Urton  
8 Jeff Clay  
9

10 **Noes, Trustees:** None  
11 **Abstain, Trustees:** None  
12 **Absent, Trustees:** Mark Moniot  
13

14 5. Madera Street Yard Fence Replacement

15 a) Consideration and Award of Bid

16 The board packet included bid results for the installation of the Madera Yard  
17 replacement fence.  
18

19 Mr. Drugan explained that the District released the Request for Bids (RFB) on  
20 October 29, 2024 with responses due to the District by November 15, 2024. The  
21 District received two responses to the RFB which were opened on November 15,  
22 2024. Harris Steel Fence Co. proposed a cost of \$273,000 and Woodward Fence Inc.  
23 proposed a cost of \$80,290. Both responses were reviewed and evaluated by District  
24 staff and both contractors were determined to be qualified bidders. The cost proposal  
25 of \$80,290 submitted by Woodward Fence Inc., a locally based company that  
26 regularly performs work in the Santa Ynez Valley, was reported as fitting within the  
27 budgeted amount of \$84,000 for this work.  
28

29 Mr. Drugan stated that the recommendation of the District is to award the Madera  
30 Yard Fence Replacement Project to Woodward Fence Inc. and authorize the General  
31 Manager to execute a contract with Woodward Fence Inc. in the amount of \$80,290  
32 to complete the work.  
33

34 It was **MOVED** by Trustee Joos, seconded by President Clay, and carried by a 4-0-0  
35 voice vote with Trustee Moniot absent, to accept the lowest responsive and  
36 responsible bid of \$80,290 from Woodward Fence Inc. for the Madera Yard Fence  
37 Replacement Project and to authorize the General Manager to execute a contract with  
38 Woodward Fence Inc. to complete the work for the stated bid amount.  
39

40 **B. OPERATIONS**

41 1. General Update

42 Mr. Drugan provided an update on the Motor Control Center (MCC) replacement work  
43 being conducted at the Meadowlark Pump Station. He indicated that all four pumps  
44 have been tested and are working with the new MCC instruments in place. Additionally,  
45 a new manual transfer switch was installed, which allows the pump station to be  
46 operated on generator backup power.  
47  
48

49 Mr. Drugan also reported on debriefing notes provided by County officials regarding  
50 the Buellton fire incident that occurred in October and knocked out communication for  
51 the Santa Ynez Valley. He reported that District staff is reviewing Satellite phone options  
52 and noted that Starlink is very popular.

- 1  
2 2. Temporary Water Service – CalTrans Highway 154 Roundabout Project  
3 Mr. Garcia discussed the roundabout construction project currently taking place at  
4 Highway 154 and Edison Street in Santa Ynez. He noted that the District is providing  
5 temporary construction water to Granite Construction for the project. Mr. Garcia  
6 explained that the temporary water service is being provided from a metered fire  
7 hydrant near the intersection of North Refugio Road and Roblar Avenue. He reported  
8 that Granite Construction requested to have the construction water delivered via  
9 temporary pipeline through a culvert under Highway 154, and that District management  
10 responded that an indemnification and release of liability agreement would be needed  
11 for that type of arrangement to be considered by the District. Mr. Garcia noted that  
12 Granite Construction decided not to pursue its request any further and that construction  
13 water continues to be provided at the above-mentioned hydrant location.  
14

15 9. **REPORT, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:**  
16

17 **A. SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT**

- 18 1. Eastern Management Area (EMA) Update  
19

20 Mr. Garcia reported that the November 21, 2024 meeting of the Eastern Management  
21 Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency (EMA GSA) was cancelled and moved to  
22 December 19, 2024. A copy of the meeting cancellation notice was included in the board  
23 packet. He also noted that a special joint meeting of the three GSAs in the Basin was  
24 held on December 6, 2024 at the Buellton City Council Chambers. A copy of the joint  
25 GSA meeting agenda was included in the board packet.  
26

27 **B. STATE WATER PROJECT – WATER SUPPLY ISSUES OVERVIEW**

- 28 1. Presentation by Chandra Chilmakuri, Ph.D., P.E., Assistant General Manager – State  
29 Water Contractors  
30

31 With approval from President Clay, this agenda item was taken out of order and  
32 discussed after the Consent Agenda, Item No. 7.  
33

34 Dr. Chandra Chilmakuri, Ph.D., P.E., Assistant General Manager of the State Water  
35 Contractors, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the State Water Project  
36 (SWP) with an emphasis on California Hydrology, the SWP System, Environmental  
37 Regulations, SWP Allocations, and a SWP Delivery Outlook.  
38

39 10. **REPORTS BY THE BOARD MEMBERS OR STAFF, QUESTIONS OF STAFF, STATUS REPORTS,**  
40 **ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMITTEE REPORTS, AND OTHER MATTERS AND/OR COMMUNICATIONS**  
41 **NOT REQUIRING BOARD ACTION**  
42

43 Trustee Burchardi informed the Board that Tom Nelson and Tom Fayram have been elected to  
44 the Board of Directors for the Los Olivos CSD. He reported that the CSD is continuing to  
45 consider a project alternative of running a wastewater pipeline from Los Olivos, down Alamo  
46 Pintado Road, to a connection near Sunny Fields Park and ultimately to the City of Solvang  
47 wastewater treatment facility. Mr. Burchardi noted that the District should stay informed about  
48 that proposal in case a pipeline project could provide an opportunity to re-align certain District  
49 infrastructure during an open construction window.  
50

1 Mr. Garcia discussed the December ACWA Conference that he attended with President Clay  
2 and Mr. Drugan. He noted the educational and networking value of the ACWA Conferences  
3 and indicated that an additional board member (two total) may want to attend in the future if  
4 there is interest.

5  
6 Mr. Garcia reported on two Special Recognition Awards that the District received from ACWA  
7 JPIA, which were announced at the ACWA Board of Directors meeting during the December  
8 Conference. One award was a President's Special Recognition Award for achieving a low ratio  
9 of paid claims and case reserves to deposit premiums in the Workers Compensation Program  
10 from July 2020 through June 2023. The second award was also a President's Special Recognition  
11 Award for achieving a low ratio of paid claims and case reserves for Deposit Programs.

12  
13 Mr. Garcia informed the Board that Mr. Lee Patton of ACWA JPIA has announced his  
14 retirement. Mr. Patton is the Senior Risk Control Advisor for ACWA JPIA and has fulfilled a  
15 long and successful career with that organization.

16  
17 **11. CORRESPONDENCE: GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FILING OF VARIOUS ITEMS:**

18 The Correspondence List was received by the Board.

19  
20 **12. REQUESTS FOR ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING AGENDA:**

21 There were no requests from the Board.

22  
23 **13. NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

24 President Clay stated that the next Regular Board meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled  
25 for January 21, 2025 at 3:00pm.

26  
27 **14. CLOSED SESSION:**

28 The Board adjourned to closed session at 6:05pm.

29  
30 **A. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - EXISTING LITIGATION**

31 [Subdivision (d)(1) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code - 2 Cases]

- 32  
33 1. Name of Case: Adjudicatory proceedings pending before the State Water Resources  
34 Control Board regarding Permit 15878 issued on Application 22423 to the City of  
35 Solvang, Petitions for Change, and Related Protests  
36  
37 2. Name of Case: Central Coast Water Authority, et al. v. Santa Barbara County Flood  
38 Control and Water Conservation District, et al., Santa Barbara County Superior Court  
39 Case No. 21CV02432  
40

41 **B. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - POTENTIAL LITIGATION**

42 [Subdivision (d)(4) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code - Potential Initiation of  
43 Litigation By the Agency - One Matter]  
44

45 **15. RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION:**

46 [Sections 54957.1 and 54957.7 of the Government Code]

- 47  
48 **A. Report (if any) on Closed Session Agenda Items 14.A - 14.B**  
49

50 The Board reconvened to open session at approximately 6:15 p.m. Mr. Garcia announced that the  
51 Board met in closed session in accordance with Agenda Items 14.A through 14.B. He reported  
52 that there was no reportable action regarding any of the closed session Agenda Items.  
53



1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21

16. **ADJOURNMENT:**  
Being no further business, it was **MOVED** by Trustee Urton, seconded by Trustee Burchardi, and carried by a 4-0-0 voice vote, with Trustee Moniot absent, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:15 p.m.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Racel Cota, Secretary to the Board

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Clay, President

**MINUTES PREPARED BY:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kylie Kelleher, Executive Administrative Assistant

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT,  
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1  
January 21, 2025**

**Consent Agenda Report**

CA-1. Water Supply and Production Report. Total water production in **December 2024 (167 AF)** was 61 AF lower than total production in **November 2024 (228 AF)**, 30 AF higher than the most recent 3-year running average (2021-2023) for the month of **December (137 AF)**, and 7 AF higher than the most recent 10-year running average (2014-2023) for the month of **December (160 AF)**. This above average production in December 2024 can be attributed to last month's below average rainfall locally. Notwithstanding this high production value for December 2024, generally the District's overall demands and total production have been trending well below historic levels for domestic, rural residential, and agricultural water deliveries due to water conservation, changing water use patterns, and private well installations.

For the month of **December 2024**, **approximately 95 AF** was produced from the Santa Ynez Upland wells and **approximately 72 AF** was produced from the Santa Ynez River alluvium. As reflected in the Monthly Water Deliveries Report from CCWA, the District did not request or take any SWP supplies for the month. Direct diversions to the County Park and USBR were **1.33 AF**.

The USBR Daily Operations Report for Lake Cachuma in December (ending December 31, 2024) recorded the end of month reservoir elevation at **745.93'** with the end of month storage of **172,162 AF**. USBR recorded total precipitation at the lake of **0.37 inches** for the month. SWP deliveries to the reservoir for South Coast entities were **0 AF**. Reported reservoir evaporation in **December** was **411.3 AF**.

Based on the updated maximum storage capacity of 192,978 AF (previously 193,305 AF), as of **January 13, 2024** Cachuma reservoir was reported at **88.4%** of capacity, with then-current storage of **170,583 AF** (Santa Barbara County Flood Control District, Rainfall and Reservoir Summary). At a point when reservoir storage exceeds 100,000 AF, the Cachuma Member Units typically have received a full allocation. Conversely, a 20% pro-rata reduction from the full allocation is scheduled to occur in Water Years beginning at less than 100,000 AF, where incremental reductions may occur (and previously have occurred) at other lower storage levels. In recent years, Reclamation approved a 100% Project allocation for federal WY 2023-2024 based on extraordinary rain conditions that spilled the reservoir in early 2023. According to similar conditions in early 2024, the reservoir spilled again last year and Reclamation issued another 100% Project allocation for federal WY 2024-2025, which began October 1, 2024. ID No.1 currently holds approximately 4,075 AF of contractual Project supplies in the reservoir, including approximately 1,424 AF of carryover and 2,651 AF of current year allocation.

Water releases for the protection of fish and aquatic habitat are made from Cachuma reservoir to the lower Santa Ynez River pursuant to the 2000 Biological Opinion issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the 2019 Water Rights Order (WR 2019-0148) issued by the State Board (SWRCB). These releases are made to Hilton Creek and to the stilling basin portion of the outlet works at the base of Bradbury Dam. The water releases required under the NMFS 2000 Biological Opinion to avoid jeopardy to steelhead and adverse impacts to its critical habitat are summarized as follows:

NMFS 2000 Biological Opinion

- *When Reservoir Spills and the Spill Amount Exceeds 20,000 AF:*
  - 10 cfs at Hwy 154 Bridge during spill year(s) exceeding 20,000 AF
  - 1.5 cfs at Alisal Bridge when spill amount exceeds 20,000 AF and if steelhead are present at Alisal Reach
  - 1.5 cfs at Alisal Bridge in the year immediately following a spill that exceeded 20,000 AF and if steelhead are present at Alisal Reach
  
- *When Reservoir Does Not Spill or When Reservoir Spills Less Than 20,000 AF:*
  - 5 cfs at Hwy 154 when Reservoir does not spill and Reservoir storage is above 120,000 AF, or when Reservoir spill is less than 20,000 AF
  - 2.5 cfs at Hwy 154 in all years when Reservoir storage is below 120,000 AF but greater than 30,000 AF
  - 1.5 cfs at Alisal Bridge if the Reservoir spilled in the preceding year and the spill amount exceeded 20,000 AF and if steelhead are present at Alisal Reach
  - 30 AF per month to “refresh the stilling basin and long pool” when Reservoir storage is less than 30,000 AF

The water releases required under the SWRCB Water Rights Order 2019-0148 for the protection of fish and other public trust resources in the lower Santa Ynez River and to prevent the waste and unreasonable use of water are summarized as follows:

SWRCB Order WR 2019-0148

- *During Below Normal, Dry, and Critical Dry water years (October 1 – September 30), releases shall be made in accordance with the requirements of the NMFS 2000 Biological Opinion as set forth above.*
  
- *During Above Normal and Wet water years, the following minimum flow requirements must be maintained at Hwy 154 and Alisal Bridges:*
  - 48 cfs from February 15 to April 14 for spawning
  - 20 cfs from February 15 to June 1 for incubation and rearing
  - 25 cfs from June 2 to June 9 for emigration, with ramping to 10 cfs by June 30
  - 10 cfs from June 30 to October 1 for rearing and maintenance of resident fish
  - 5 cfs from October 1 to February 15 for resident fish
  
- *For purposes of SWRCB Order WR 2019-0148, water year classifications are as follows:*
  - Wet is when Cachuma Reservoir inflow is greater than 117,842 AF;
  - Above Normal is when Reservoir inflow is less than or equal to 117,842 AF or greater than 33,707 AF;
  - Below Normal is when Reservoir inflow is less than or equal to 33,707 AF or greater than 15,366 AF;
  - Dry is when Reservoir inflow is less than or equal to 15,366 AF or greater than 4,550 AF
  - Critical Dry is when Reservoir inflow is less than or equal to 4,550 AF

Based on recent dry conditions locally, inflows to Cachuma Reservoir this water year have not exceeded 33,707 AF and therefore have not triggered higher fishery release requirements from Bradbury Dam (Table 2 flows under Order 20219-0148; highlighted above).



CA-2. State Water Project (SWP) and Central Coast Water Authority (CCWA) Updates.

As previously reported, in 2023 DWR declared a 100 percent SWP Table A allocation for the first time since 2006 (compared to a 5 percent allocation in 2022). In 2024, despite above normal precipitation and snowpack, and above-average storage levels in Lake Oroville, DWR took a conservative approach and limited the final Table A allocation to 40 percent. DWR's rationale for its conservative allocation decision was outlined as follows:

*Although water year 2024 is currently classified as an Above Normal year, the ability to move water supply south through the system this spring continues to be impacted by the presence of threatened and endangered fish species near SWP pumping facilities in the south Delta. The presence of these fish species has triggered state and federal regulations that significantly reduce the pumping from the Delta into the California Aqueduct, which limits the SWP's ability to move and store water in San Luis Reservoir. This reduced pumping is expected to continue into late spring. The SWP is prepared to increase pumping as soon as the fishery conditions and state and federal operating permits allow.*

**By notice to SWP Contractors dated December 2, 2024, DWR issued an initial 2025 SWP Table A allocation of 5 percent (5%). On December 23, 2024, DWR issued an updated notice increasing the 2025 SWP Table A allocation to 15 percent (15%).** DWR explained that the Table A increase was attributable to a late November atmospheric river in northern California that improved water supply conditions. DWR's December 23rd notice provided an overview of the Table A allocation factors as follows:

*To determine the available SWP water supplies, DWR considers factors including SWP contractors' anticipated carryover supplies into 2025, projected 2025 demands, existing storage in SWP conservation facilities, estimates of future runoff, SWP operational and regulatory requirements from the Federal Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act, and water rights obligations under the State Water Resources Control Board's authority.*

As reflected in Agendas for recent CCWA Board of Director meetings (September-October 2024) and in the Agenda for the recent January 9, 2025 meeting of the CCWA Operating Committee, CCWA remains engaged in a variety of matters relating to the SWP, including but not limited to: SWP supplies and related SWP operations; water transfers by CCWA member agencies; California Aqueduct Subsidence Issues; SWP Facility Golden Mussel detection; CCWA infrastructure maintenance; and the upcoming CCWA FY 2025-2026 Budget. CCWA and its member agencies also remain engaged in their pending litigation against the Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District to maintain CCWA sovereignty over important decisions pertaining to SWP supplies. CCWA did not schedule Board meetings for November or December 2024, and its next Regular Meeting is currently set for January 23, 2025.



— BUREAU OF —  
RECLAMATION

December 2024

DAY	ELEV	STORAGE ACRE-FEET		COMPUTED*	CCWA	PRECIP ON		RELEASE - AF.				EVAPORATION		PRECIP
		IN LAKE	CHANGE	INFLOW AF.	INFLOW AF.	RES. SURF. AF.	TUNNEL	HILTON CREEK	OUTLET	SPILLWAY	AF.	INCH	INCHES	
	746.67	174,290												
1	746.64	174,203	-87	-18.3	0.0	0.0	24.9	13.5	16.0	0.0	14.3	0.090	0.00	
2	746.62	174,145	-58	-4.5	0.0	0.0	23.5	13.4	15.0	0.0	1.6	0.010	0.00	
3	746.60	174,087	-58	34.0	0.0	0.0	34.0	13.4	16.0	0.0	28.6	0.180	0.00	
4	746.57	174,001	-86	-7.8	0.0	0.0	38.7	13.4	15.0	0.0	11.1	0.070	0.00	
5	746.55	173,944	-57	19.3	0.0	0.0	39.0	13.4	16.0	0.0	7.9	0.050	0.00	
6	746.52	173,857	-87	-7.5	0.0	0.0	41.6	13.4	15.0	0.0	9.5	0.060	0.00	
7	746.50	173,800	-57	24.8	0.0	0.0	39.7	13.4	16.0	0.0	12.7	0.080	0.00	
8	746.47	173,714	-86	5.6	0.0	0.0	44.2	13.4	15.0	0.0	19.0	0.120	0.00	
9	746.45	173,656	-58	21.2	0.0	0.0	39.7	13.4	15.0	0.0	11.1	0.070	0.00	
10	746.42	173,570	-86	-4.5	0.0	0.0	42.6	13.4	16.0	0.0	9.5	0.060	0.00	
11	746.39	173,484	-86	3.8	0.0	0.0	42.4	13.4	15.0	0.0	19.0	0.120	0.00	
12	746.35	173,369	-115	-27.8	0.0	0.0	46.7	13.4	16.0	0.0	11.1	0.070	0.00	
13	746.33	173,311	-58	26.0	0.0	0.0	49.3	13.4	15.0	0.0	6.3	0.040	0.00	
14	746.32	173,283	-28	124.1	0.0	0.0	44.6	13.3	15.0	0.0	79.2	0.500	0.00	
15	746.29	173,196	-87	-36.3	0.0	24.0	40.6	13.4	16.0	0.0	4.7	0.030	0.10	
16	746.25	173,081	-115	-36.1	0.0	0.0	41.1	13.3	15.0	0.0	9.5	0.060	0.00	
17	746.23	173,024	-57	30.6	0.0	0.0	51.4	13.3	15.0	0.0	7.9	0.050	0.00	
18	746.20	172,938	-86	12.3	0.0	0.0	53.2	13.3	16.0	0.0	15.8	0.100	0.00	
19	746.18	172,880	-58	37.5	0.0	0.0	51.4	13.3	15.0	0.0	15.8	0.100	0.00	
20	746.14	172,765	-115	-18.7	0.0	0.0	53.8	13.3	15.0	0.0	14.2	0.090	0.00	
21	746.13	172,736	-29	60.5	0.0	0.0	48.6	13.3	15.0	0.0	12.6	0.080	0.00	
22	746.10	172,650	-86	3.9	0.0	0.0	55.9	13.3	16.0	0.0	4.7	0.030	0.00	
23	746.07	172,535	-115	-31.2	0.0	0.0	44.4	13.3	15.0	0.0	11.1	0.070	0.00	
24	746.06	172,535	0	82.9	0.0	0.0	45.1	13.3	15.0	0.0	9.5	0.060	0.00	
25	746.06	172,535	0	7.7	0.0	55.0	29.7	13.3	15.0	0.0	4.7	0.030	0.23	
26	746.04	172,478	-57	9.5	0.0	0.0	27.2	13.3	15.0	0.0	11.0	0.070	0.00	
27	746.01	172,391	-87	-23.3	0.0	2.4	27.3	13.3	16.0	0.0	9.5	0.060	0.01	
28	746.00	172,363	-28	33.6	0.0	2.4	27.9	13.2	15.0	0.0	7.9	0.050	0.01	
29	745.99	172,334	-29	46.3	0.0	2.4	38.4	13.3	15.0	0.0	11.0	0.070	0.01	
30	745.96	172,248	-86	-7.9	0.0	0.0	38.9	13.2	15.0	0.0	11.0	0.070	0.00	
31	745.93	172,162	-86	-12.3	0.0	2.4	37.4	13.2	16.0	0.0	9.5	0.060	0.01	
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>-2,128</b>	<b>347.4</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>88.6</b>	<b>1,263.2</b>	<b>413.5</b>	<b>476.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>411.3</b>	<b>2.600</b>	<b>0.37</b>	
<b>AVERAGE</b>		<b>173,138</b>												

Comments: \*Computed inflow is the sum of change in storage, releases and evaporation minus precip on the reservoir surface and CCWA inflow.  
 Indicated outlet release includes leakage from outlet valves and spillway gates.  
 Data based on a 24 hour period ending 0800.



# Santa Barbara County - Flood Control District

130 East Victoria Street, Santa Barbara CA 93101 - 805.568.3440 - [www.countyofsb.org/pwd](http://www.countyofsb.org/pwd)

## Rainfall and Reservoir Summary

Updated 8am: 1/13/2025

Water Year: 2025

Storm Number: NA

Notes: Daily rainfall amounts are recorded as of 8am for the previous 24 hours. Rainfall units are expressed in inches. All data on this page are from automated sensors, are preliminary, and subject to verification.

\*Each Water Year (WY) runs from Sept 1 through Aug 31 and is designated by the calendar year in which it ends

County Real-Time Rainfall and Reservoir Website link > <https://rain.cosbpw.net>

Rainfall	ID	24 hrs	Storm 0day(s)	Month	Year*	% to Date	% of Year*	AI
Buellton (Fire Stn)	233	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.61	9%	4%	
Cachuma Dam (USBR)	332	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.83	11%	4%	
Carpinteria (Fire Stn)	208	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.64	9%	4%	
Cuyama (Fire Stn)	436	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.83	28%	11%	
Figueroa Mtn (USFS Stn)	421	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.35	28%	11%	10.5
Gibraltar Dam (City Facility)	230	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.36	4%	1%	11.4
Goleta (Fire Stn-Los Carneros)	440	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.88	12%	5%	
Lompoc (City Hall)	439	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.41	24%	9%	10.7
Los Alamos (Fire Stn)	204	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.52	26%	10%	
San Marcos Pass (USFS Stn)	212	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.26	9%	4%	
Santa Barbara (County Bldg)	234	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.64	9%	3%	
Santa Maria (City Pub.Works)	380	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.17	41%	16%	
Santa Ynez (Fire Stn /Airport)	218	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.65	10%	4%	
Sisquoc (Fire Stn)	256	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.54	26%	10%	

Countywide percentage of "Normal-to-Date" rainfall : **18%**

Countywide percentage of "Normal Water-Year" rainfall : **7%**

Countywide percentage of "Normal Water-Year" rainfall calculated assuming no more rain through Aug. 31, 2025 (End of WY2025).

**AI (Antecedent Index / Soil Wetness)**

6.0 and below = Wet (min. = 2.5)

6.1 - 9.0 = Moderate

9.1 and above = Dry (max. = 12.5)

### Reservoirs

Reservoir Elevations referenced to NGVD-29.

\*\*Cachuma is full and subject to spilling at elevation 750 ft.

However, the lake is surcharged to 753 ft. for fish release water.

(Cachuma water storage based on Dec 2021 capacity revision)

Click on Site for Real-Time Readings	Spillway	Current	Max.	Current	Current	Storage	Storage
	Elev. (ft)	Elev. (ft)	Storage (ac-ft)	Storage (ac-ft)	Capacity (%)	Change Mo.(ac-ft)	Change Year*(ac-ft)
<u>Gibraltar Reservoir</u>	1,400.00	1,377.29	4,693	792	16.9%	-25	-2,443
<u>Cachuma Reservoir</u>	753.**	745.53	192,978	170,583	88.4%	-1,118	-14,142
<u>Jameson Reservoir</u>	2,224.00	2,220.14	4,848	4,381	90.4%	-33	-396
<u>Twitchell Reservoir</u>	651.50	NA	194,971	NA		NA	NA

[Previous Rainfall and Reservoir Summaries](#)

# CIMIS Daily Report

Rendered in ENGLISH Units.

Sunday, December 1, 2024 - Wednesday, January 1, 2025

Printed on Thursday, January 2, 2025

## Santa Ynez - Central Coast Valleys - Station 64

Date	ETo (in)	Precip (in)	Sol Rad (Ly/day)	Avg Vap Pres (mBars)	Max Air Temp (°F)	Min Air Temp (°F)	Avg Air Temp (°F)	Max Rel Hum (%)	Min Rel Hum (%)	Avg Rel Hum (%)	Dew Point (°F)	Avg Wind Speed (mph)	Wind Run (miles)	Avg Soil Temp (°F)
12/1/2024	0.09	0.00	306	7.7	79.7	34.3	55.0	91	13	52	37.8	1.8	44.2	62.2
12/2/2024	0.06	0.00	256	7.1	74.8	29.3	46.2	97	25	67	35.9	1.5	36.6	62.1
12/3/2024	0.07 R	0.00	278	7.2	75.3	27.4	46.0	98	26	68	36.2	1.5	36.3	61.5
12/4/2024	0.07	0.00	289	8.1	71.4	27.2	45.9	98	42	77	39.1	1.8	42.6	60.9
12/5/2024	0.06	0.00	255	8.7	78.3	34.3	49.6	100	29	72	40.8	1.5	35.4	60.5
12/6/2024	0.08	0.00	293	7.3	85.0 Y	28.5	48.9	99	18	62	36.4	1.5	36.1	60.4
12/7/2024	0.08 R	0.00	296	6.7	83.8 Y	26.9	49.6	98	16	55	34.3	1.7	40.5	60.2
12/8/2024	0.06	0.00	241	7.2	76.4	31.0	46.9	94	26	65	35.9	1.6	39.3	60.0
12/9/2024	0.07	0.00	291	6.7	73.6	24.1	43.5	97	30	70	34.4	1.5	37.1	59.8
12/10/2024	0.07	0.00	293	4.5	73.9	20.7	42.0	96	15	49	24.5	1.7	40.6	59.3
12/11/2024	0.06	0.00	217	4.4	73.0	25.4	41.9	85	14	49	24.0	1.4	34.3	58.7
12/12/2024	0.04	0.00	160	7.6	60.0	25.5	42.9	95	58	81	37.6	2.6	62.3	58.2
12/13/2024	0.06	0.00	253	8.6	67.5	35.1	47.7	98	43	76	40.5	1.6	39.5	57.9
12/14/2024	0.04	0.06	234	9.9	63.8	37.7	52.4	96	42	73	44.2	3.1	74.1	57.9
12/15/2024	0.06	0.00	271	7.8	67.8	33.6	44.7	99	37	78	38.3	1.7	41.0	57.9
12/16/2024	0.05	0.00	222	7.4	64.3	28.8	45.0	98	38	73	36.7	2.0	48.0	57.7
12/17/2024	0.09	0.00	275	7.4	79.5	32.8	53.5	97	21	53	36.8	2.7	64.6	57.5
12/18/2024	0.08	0.00	0 R	6.3	62.5	38.6	46.5	92	15	58	32.7	1.3	30.1	57.7
12/19/2024	0.08	0.00	0	5.7	56.2	36.0	43.2	90	16	60	30.3	1.2	28.9	57.8
12/20/2024	0.08	0.00	279	7.2	79.8	30.3	49.6	95	20	60	36.2	2.4	58.1	58.0
12/21/2024	0.06	0.00	260	9.6	70.8	33.0	49.5	99	45	79	43.3	2.0	47.9	58.0
12/22/2024	0.03	0.00	155	12.3	73.9	40.9	54.0	97	60	86	50.1	2.2	53.5	58.2
12/23/2024	0.06	0.00	239	14.4 Y	74.2	51.0 Y	59.6 Y	99	54	83 Y	54.4 Y	2.3	54.2	58.6
12/24/2024	0.03	0.11	142	12.0	61.1	44.2	53.2	100	66	87	49.4	3.5	82.8	59.5
12/25/2024	0.06	0.00	201	8.4	62.9	42.1	51.4	88	41	65	39.9	3.6	86.4	59.4
12/26/2024	0.06	0.00	223	9.4	70.0	40.1	52.5	97	27	69	42.8	2.7	65.8	58.8
12/27/2024	0.03	0.03	153	14.1 Y	67.9	50.4	56.3	98	71	91 Y	53.7 Y	3.3	80.1	58.7
12/28/2024	0.06	0.00	240	13.1	68.7	49.5	55.6	98	60	87	51.8	2.3	54.5	59.2
12/29/2024	0.06	0.00	239	12.5	68.3	46.5	56.2	97	53	81	50.5	3.6	85.5	59.6
12/30/2024	0.07	0.00	283	9.8	72.9	35.3	51.1	98	38	77	44.0	2.2	52.8	59.8 Y
12/31/2024	0.06	0.00	272	7.0	69.9	29.8	43.8	99	32	71	35.2	2.0	47.3	59.5 Y
Tots/Avg	1.93	0.20	230	8.6	71.2	34.5	49.2	96	35	70	39.6	2.1	51.0	59.2

## Santa Ynez - Central Coast Valleys - Station 64

Date	ETo (in)	Precip (in)	Sol Rad (Ly/day)	Avg Vap Pres (mBars)	Max Air Temp (°F)	Min Air Temp (°F)	Avg Air Temp (°F)	Max Rel Hum (%)	Min Rel Hum (%)	Avg Rel Hum (%)	Dew Point (°F)	Avg Wind Speed (mph)	Wind Run (miles)	Avg Soil Temp (°F)
1/1/2025	0.07	0.00	285	6.6	72.3	24.8	44.3	97	22	67	34.0	2.1	50.4	58.7 Y
Tots/Avg	0.07	0.00	285	6.6	72.3	24.8	44.3	97	22	67	34.0	2.1	50.4	58.7

Flag Legend		
A - Historical Average	I - Ignore	R - Far out of normal range
C or N - Not Collected	M - Missing Data	S - Not in service
H - Hourly Missing or Flagged Data	Q - Related Sensor Missing	Y - Moderately out of range
Conversion Factors		
Ly/day/2.065=W/sq.m	inches * 25.4 = mm	(F-32) * 5/9 = c
mph * 0.447 = m/s	mBars * 0.1 = kPa	miles * 1.60934 = km



**CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Dessi Mladenova, Controller  
**FROM:** Lacey Adam, Senior Accountant  
**SUBJECT:** Monthly Water Deliveries

January 6, 2025

According to the CCWA revenue meters at each turnout, the following deliveries were made during the month of December 2024:

<u>Project Participant</u>	<u>Delivery Amount (acre-feet)</u>
Chorro .....	108
López.....	0
Shandon.....	0
Guadalupe.....	42
Santa Maria.....	337
Golden State Water Co.....	0
Vandenberg.....	204
Buellton .....	16
Solvang .....	0
Santa Ynez ID#1 .....	0
Bradbury.....	<u>7</u>
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>714</b>

In order to reconcile these deliveries with the DWR revenue meter, which read 733 acre-feet, the following delivery amounts should be used for billing purposes:

<u>Project Participant</u>	<u>Delivery Amount (acre-feet)</u>
Chorro .....	111
López .....	0
Shandon.....	0
Guadalupe.....	43
Santa Maria .....	346*
Golden State Water Co .....	0*
Vandenberg .....	209
Buellton .....	17
Solvang .....	0
Santa Ynez ID#1 .....	0
Bradbury .....	<u>7</u>
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>733</b>

\*Golden State Water Company delivered 0 acre-feet into its system through the Santa Maria turnout. This delivery is recorded by providing a credit of 0 acre-feet to the City of Santa Maria and a charge in the same amount to the Golden State Water Company.

Notes: Santa Ynez ID#1 water usage is divided into 0 acre-feet of Table A water and 0 acre-feet of exchange water.

The exchange water is allocated as follows

<u>Project Participant</u>	<u>Exchange Amount (acre-feet)</u>
Goleta	0
Santa Barbara	0
Montecito	0
Carpinteria	<u>0</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>

Bradbury Deliveries into Lake Cachuma are allocated as follows:

<u>Project Participant</u>	<u>Delivery Amount (acre-feet)</u>
Carpinteria	0
Goleta	0
La Cumbre	0
Montecito	0
Morehart	7
Santa Barbara	0
Raytheon	<u>0</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>

cc: Daniel Brooks, GWD  
Mike Babb, Golden State WC  
Joshua Haggmark, City of Santa Barbara  
Janet Gingras, COMB  
Craig Kesler, San Luis Obispo County  
Paeter Garcia, Santa Ynez RWCD ID#1  
Shad Springer, City of Santa Maria  
Todd Bodem, City of Guadalupe  
Robert MacDonald, Carpinteria Valley WD  
Mike Alvarado, La Cumbre Mutual WC  
Pernell Rush, Vandenberg SFB  
Nick Turner, Montecito WD  
Jose Acosta, City of Solvang  
Rose Hess, City of Buellton

**NOTICE TO STATE WATER PROJECT CONTRACTORS****Date: December 23, 2024****Number: 24-08****Subject: Increase of State Water Project 2025 Allocation to 15 Percent****From:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Yarbrough".

---

**John Yarbrough  
Deputy Director, State Water Project  
Department of Water Resources**

With the late November atmospheric river that arrived in northern California and improved water supply conditions as reflected in the December 1, 2024 forecast, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) is increasing the State Water Project (SWP) allocation from five to fifteen percent of most State Water Project (SWP) contractors' requested Maximum Annual Table A Amounts for 2025, as shown in Attachment A – 2025 SWP Allocation, updated December 23, 2024. DWR may revise the SWP allocation if water supply conditions change.

To determine the available SWP water supplies, DWR considers factors including SWP contractors' anticipated carryover supplies into 2025, projected 2025 demands, existing storage in SWP conservation facilities, estimates of future runoff, SWP operational and regulatory requirements from the Federal Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act, and water rights obligations under the State Water Resources Control Board's authority.

To schedule SWP water deliveries under this allocation, DWR will develop the fifteen percent water delivery schedules by prorating the ten percent schedules submitted by the SWP contractors in October 2024 (as part of initial requests) or as revised with any subsequent updates. If an SWP contractor foresees any changes to their water delivery schedule, please communicate such changes to DWR in a timely manner.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Molly White, Assistant Division Manager, Water Management, SWP Division of Operations and Maintenance, at [Molly.White@water.ca.gov](mailto:Molly.White@water.ca.gov).

Attachment A: 2025 State Water Project Allocation, updated December 23, 2025



**Attachment A**  
**2025 STATE WATER PROJECT ALLOCATION**  
 Updated  
 December 23, 2024

SWP Contractors	Maximum Annual Table A Amount (Acre-Feet)  (1)	Approved Table A Allocation (Acre-Feet)  (2)	Approved Allocation as a Percentage of Maximum Annual Table A Amount (3) = (2)/(1)
<b><u>FEATHER RIVER</u></b>			
County of Butte	27,500	5,000	~18%
Plumas County FC&WCD	2,700	405	15%
City of Yuba City	9,600	2,400	25%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>39,800</b>	<b>7,805</b>	
<b><u>NORTH BAY</u></b>			
Napa County FC&WCD	29,025	7,257	25%
Solano County WA	47,756	11,939	25%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>76,781</b>	<b>19,196</b>	
<b><u>SOUTH BAY</u></b>			
Alameda County FC&WCD, Zone 7	80,619	12,093	15%
Alameda County WD	42,000	6,300	15%
Santa Clara Valley WD	100,000	15,000	15%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>222,619</b>	<b>33,393</b>	
<b><u>SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY</u></b>			
Oak Flat WD	5,700	855	15%
County of Kings	9,305	1,396	15%
Dudley Ridge WD	41,350	6,203	15%
Empire West Side ID	3,617	543	15%
Kern County WA	982,730	147,410	15%
Tulare Lake Basin WSD	86,854	13,029	15%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,129,556</b>	<b>169,436</b>	
<b><u>CENTRAL COASTAL</u></b>			
San Luis Obispo County FC&WCD	25,000	3,750	15%
Santa Barbara County FC&WCD	45,486	6,823	15%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>70,486</b>	<b>10,573</b>	
<b><u>SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA</u></b>			
Antelope Valley-East Kern WA	144,844	21,727	15%
Santa Clarita Valley WA	95,200	14,280	15%
Coachella Valley WD	138,350	20,753	15%
Crestline-Lake Arrowhead WA	5,800	870	15%
Desert WA	55,750	8,363	15%
Littlerock Creek ID	2,300	345	15%
Metropolitan WDSC	1,911,500	286,725	15%
Mojave WA	89,800	13,470	15%
Palmdale WD	21,300	3,195	15%
San Bernardino Valley MWD	102,600	15,390	15%
San Gabriel Valley MWD	28,800	4,320	15%
San Geronio Pass WA	17,300	2,595	15%
Ventura County WPD	20,000	3,000	15%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2,633,544</b>	<b>395,033</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,172,786</b>	<b>635,436</b>	<b>~15%</b>





# STATE WATER PROJECT ALLOCATION INCREASES FOLLOWING RECENT STORMS

BY DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES DEC 23, 2024 WATER NEWS

SACRAMENTO – Today, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced an update to the State Water Project (SWP) allocation forecast for 2025. The allocation has increased to 15 percent of requested supplies, up from the initial allocation forecast of 5 percent announced earlier this month. The SWP provides water to 29 public water agencies that serve 27 million Californians.

Strong storms in late November and early December have helped boost statewide precipitation to just above average for this time of year. Reservoir levels have also increased because of the storms. The initial allocation forecast announced on December 2 had not accounted for these storms because the data was not yet available to water managers. Prior to the second half of November, the start of the water year had been dry and warm.

“The past several weeks has brought welcome rain and snow to Northern California and these improved conditions have allowed the State Water Project to increase the allocation forecast to the benefit of millions of Californians,” said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. “While we typically wait to provide an update until January, we felt it important to let our State Water Contractors know of the increase as soon as possible to allow them to better plan their water supply for the year ahead.”

State water managers will continue to monitor precipitation and snowpack conditions as well as account for dry soils that may soak up some of the spring runoff following record heat this past summer. Additionally, Southern California remains very dry and has not benefited from the atmospheric rivers experienced so far this season.

“California is still in the early months of our wet season and as recent history has shown, conditions can change quickly,” said Dr. Michael Anderson, State Climatologist. “While Northern California has benefitted from early season storms, dry conditions in the new year can leave us with below average totals when warmer weather arrives.”

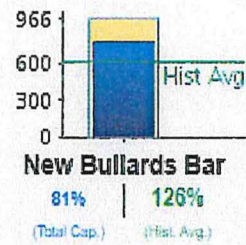
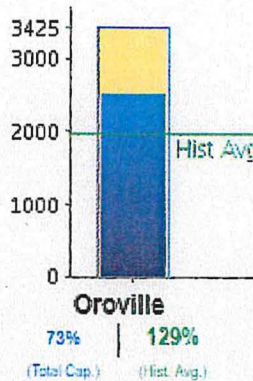
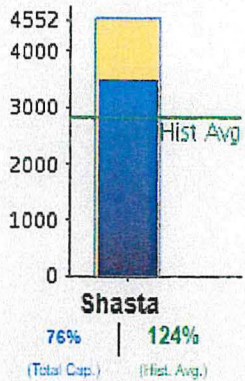
Each year, DWR provides SWP allocation forecasts based on available water storage, projected water supply, and water demands. Allocations are updated monthly as snowpack, rainfall, and runoff information is assessed, with a final allocation typically determined in May or June. As the winter progresses, if California sees an increase in rain and snowfall, the allocation forecast may increase. The next update will likely come in January and will use information from the first snow surveys of the season.

The allocation forecast notice to State Water Contractors and historical data on SWP allocations are available on DWR's website.

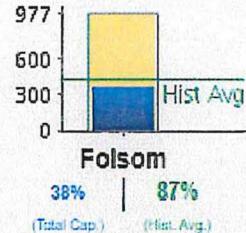
© 2025 Association of California Water Agencies

**CURRENT CONDITIONS: MAJOR WATER SUPPLY RESERVOIRS: 15-JAN-2025**

Data as of Midnight: 15-Jan-2025



Change Date:  15-Jan-2025

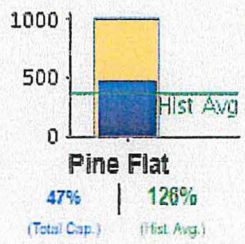
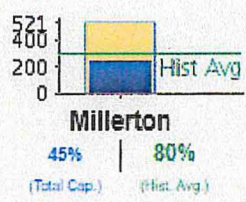
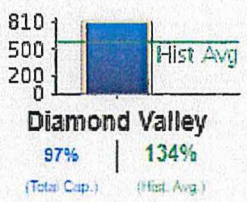
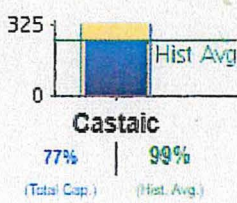
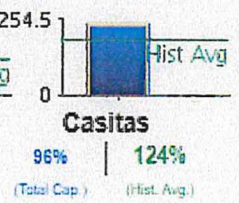
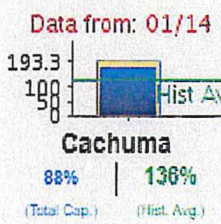
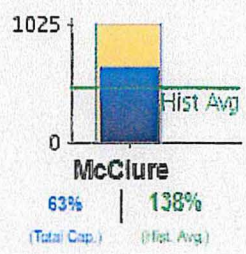
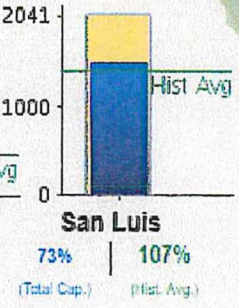
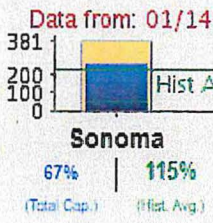
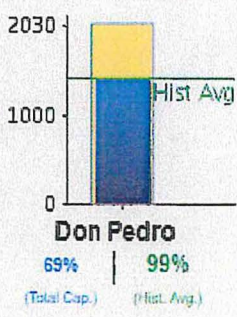
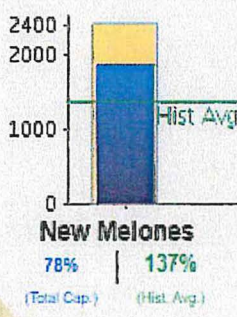
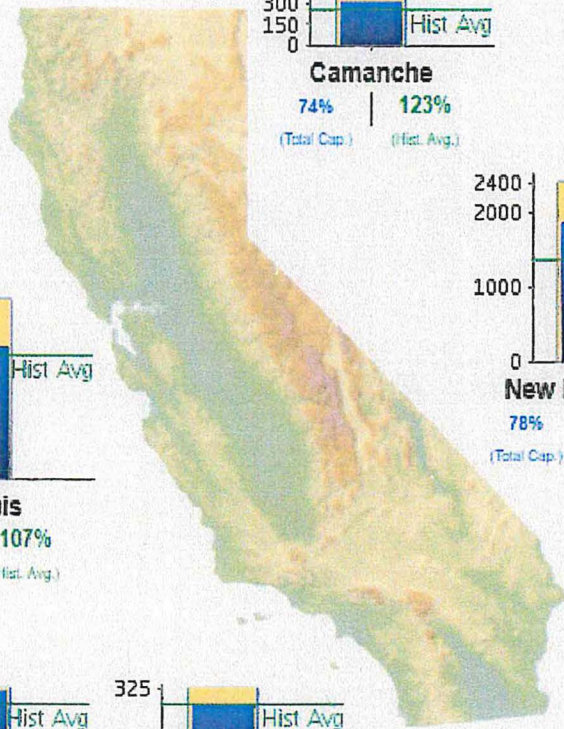
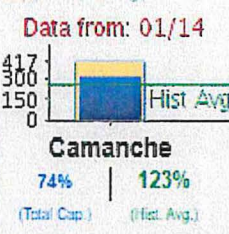
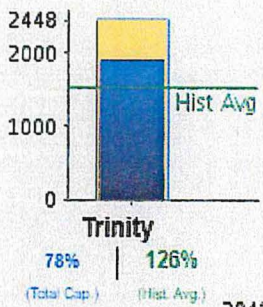


**LEGEND**

Blue Bar: Storage level for date  
 Gold Bar: Total reservoir capacity  
 Green Line: Historic level for date.

Capacity (TAF) | Historical Avg. Mark

% of Capacity | % Hist. Avg.  
 (Click res. 3 char. code for details)



[Click for printable version of current data.](#)

Report Generated: 16-Jan-2025 10:17 AM

The CSI link has been disabled to zoom in, for the lack of historical data.



# First Snow Survey of the Season Shows Snowpack Near Average for California

Published: Jan 02, 2025

## *After a Warm, Dry Fall, Recent Storms Provide Boost to Snowpack but Return of Dry Conditions Looms*

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** – The Department of Water Resources (DWR) today conducted the first snow survey of the season at Phillips Station. The manual survey recorded 24 inches of snow depth and a snow water equivalent of 9 inches, which is 91 percent of average for this location. The snow water equivalent measures the amount of water contained in the snowpack and is a key component of DWR’s water supply forecast. Statewide, the snowpack is 108 percent of average for this date.

Recent years in California have been marked by extremely hot and dry conditions broken up by periods of intense rain and snow. So far, this water year has been no different. A record-breaking hot and dry summer continued well into the fall, but a powerful atmospheric river in November broke several rainfall records in Northern California. A series of storms in late December provided another boost.

“While our snowpack looks good now, we have a long way until April when our water supply picture will be more complete,” said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. “Extreme shifts between dry and wet conditions are continuing this winter and if the past several years are any indication, anything could happen between now and April and we need to be prepared.”

DWR’s electronic readings from 130 stations placed throughout the Sierra Nevada indicate that the statewide snowpack’s snow water equivalent is 10.7 inches, or 108 percent of average for this date, compared to 28 percent on this date last year.

California has seen this pattern before. In both 2013 and [2022](#), the January snowpack was well above average thanks to December storm activity, only for dry conditions to take over the rest of the winter, quickly erasing early season snow totals and continuing existing drought conditions across the state.

“We are fortunate to have had several solid snow-producing atmospheric river systems so far this season,” said DWR’s Snow Surveys and Water Supply Forecasting Unit Manager Andy Reising. “The fall was extremely dry, so our healthy snow totals are thanks to a handful of big storm systems in November and late December. But to finish the year where we need to be, we will still need additional snow building at a regular pace throughout the winter.”

Major reservoirs statewide are currently 121 percent of average thanks to [two consecutive years of above average snowpack conditions](#), which occurred after the driest three-year period on record in California. DWR is [preparing for these swings between extreme conditions](#) by investing in climate resilience, including the use of Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations, floodplain and flood infrastructure improvements and groundwater recharge efforts that will ensure California is able to capture and use as much water during flood conditions as possible.

On average, the Sierra snowpack supplies about 30 percent of California’s water needs. Its natural ability to store water is why the Sierra snowpack is often referred to as California’s “frozen reservoir.” Data from these snow surveys and forecasts produced by DWR’s Snow Surveys and Water Supply Forecasting Unit are important factors in determining how DWR manages the state’s water resources.

DWR conducts four media-oriented snow surveys at Phillips Station each winter near the first of each month, January through April and, if necessary, May. The next survey is tentatively scheduled for **February 3**.

For California’s current hydrological conditions, visit <https://cww.water.ca.gov>

**Additional Resources**



A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OPERATING COMMITTEE
of the
CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY

will be held at 9:00 a.m., on Thursday, January 9, 2025
at 255 Industrial Way, Buellton

Members of the public may participate by video call or telephone via Microsoft Teams
Meeting ID: 222 918 312 265
Passcode: Ep6R9Sn3
or
via phone +1 323-484-5095 Phone conference ID: 542 247 754#

Eric Friedman
Chairman

Jeff Clay
Vice Chairman

Ray A. Stokes
Executive Director

Brownstein Hyatt
Farber Schreck
General Counsel

Member Agencies

City of Buellton

Carpinteria Valley
Water District

City of Guadalupe

City of Santa Barbara

City of Santa Maria

Goleta Water District

Montecito Water District

Santa Ynez River Water
Conservation District,
Improvement District #1

Associate Member

La Cumbre Mutual
Water Company

Public Comment on agenda items may occur via video call or telephonically, or by submission to the Board Secretary via email at lfw@ccwa.com no later than 8:00 a.m. on the day of the meeting. In your email, please specify (1) the meeting date and agenda item (number and title) on which you are providing a comment and (2) that you would like your comment read into the record during the meeting. If you would like your comment read into the record during the meeting (as either general public comment or on a specific agenda item), please limit your comments to no more than 250 words.

Every effort will be made to read comments into the record, but some comments may not be read due to time limitations. Please also note that if you submit a written comment and do not specify that you would like this comment read into the record during the meeting, your comment will be forwarded to Board members for their consideration.

Pursuant to Government Code section 54957.5, non-exempt public records that relate to open session agenda items and are distributed to a majority of the Board less than seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting will be available on the CCWA internet web site, accessible at https://www.ccwa.com.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

II. Public Comment – (Any member of the public may address the Committee relating to any matter within the Committee’s jurisdiction. Individual Speakers may be limited to five minutes; all speakers to a total of fifteen minutes.)

III. \* Consent Calendar

- A. Minutes of the October 10, 2024 Operating Committee Meeting
Staff Recommendation: Approve Consent Calendar.

IV. Executive Director’s Report

- A. Operations Update
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.
B. Water Supply Situation Report
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.
C. California Aqueduct Subsidence Update
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.
D. State Water Project Facility Golden Mussel Detection
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.
\* E. FY 2025/26 Budget Preparation Schedule
Staff Recommendation: Informational item only.

V. CLOSED SESSION

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION
Initiation of litigation pursuant to Government Code section 54956.9(d) (4): 1 case

VI. Reports from Committee Members for Information Only

VII. Date of Next Regular Meeting: March 13, 2025

VIII. Adjournment

255 Industrial Way
Buellton, CA 93427
(805) 688-2292
Fax (805) 686-4700
www.ccwa.com

\* Indicates attachment of document to agenda packet

Handwritten signature and number #5242111



# Central Coast Water Authority

(<https://www.ccwa.com/>)

[Contact Us \(/contact-us\)](/contact-us)

Search...

Go!

## THIS ITEM APPEARS ON

[BOARD MEETINGS \(/BOARD-MEETINGS\)](/board-meetings)

JAN  
**23**  
2025

## Board Meeting

📍 [Join Remote Meeting](#)

will be held at 9:00 a.m., on Thursday, January 23, 2025

at 255 Industrial Way, Buellton, California 93427

Members of the public may participate by video call or telephone via

**Microsoft Teams** ([https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_ZTkyZTQoOTUtMDNjYy00MzgwLWJlOTUtZmUoMDllOTMyYcontext=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22b14be4f7-7c7c-4b40-ba42-521465dfa37%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22da14aea1-a759-4fa9-bb55-9f0db5d054eb%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZTkyZTQoOTUtMDNjYy00MzgwLWJlOTUtZmUoMDllOTMyYcontext=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22b14be4f7-7c7c-4b40-ba42-521465dfa37%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22da14aea1-a759-4fa9-bb55-9f0db5d054eb%22%7d)) Meeting ID: 255 983 543 71 Passcode: bZ3Y3dL9

or by dialing +1 323-484-5095. (tel:+13234845095,,80623627)and entering access Code/Meeting ID: 806 236 27#

COPYRIGHT © 2025 CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY

255 INDUSTRIAL WAY, BUELLTON CA 93427

TELEPHONE (805) 688-2292

[Join our mailing list](#)

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Racel Cota **FILE NUMBER:** 102870-0001

**FROM:** Jeffrey A. Dinkin  
Lindsay Bowden

**DATE:** December 30, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Suggested Revisions to Personnel Policy Manual

---

We have reviewed the District's Personnel Policy Manual and have the following suggested revisions based on an assessment of existing policies and changes in the law since the last review of the Manual.

First, California Senate Bill 1815 removes "historically" from the definition of "race," and defines race to include traits associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles, and adds definitions for "race" and "protective hairstyle." Under California Senate Bill 1137, discrimination is prohibited not just on basis of individual protected traits, but is now prohibited on basis of intersectionality, which is the combination of two or more protected traits. Accordingly, it is recommended that the following language be added to the Manual in following sections that have been redlined below:

**SECTION 1(5). EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

SYRWCD ID#1 supports equal employment opportunities and does not unlawfully discriminate against its employees or applicants because of their actual or perceived race (inclusive of traits associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, religious creed, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions), sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ancestry, age (40 and above), marital status, military or veteran status, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, citizenship status, or any other basis protected by law. SYRWCD ID#1 also does not unlawfully discriminate based on a combination of two or more of these protected characteristics. SYRWCD ID#1 also makes reasonable accommodations for legally disabled employees unless to do so would constitute an undue hardship. Finally, SYRWCD ID#1 prohibits the harassment of any individual based on any of the categories listed above. This policy applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, compensation, benefits and other programs.

**SECTION 4(17). HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND RETALIATION PREVENTION POLICY**

SYRWCD ID#1 is committed to providing a workplace free of sexual harassment or discrimination (which includes harassment or discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions) as well as unlawful harassment or discrimination based on such factors as race (inclusive of traits associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, religious creed,



national origin, ancestry, age for individuals over forty years of age, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, citizenship status, military and veteran status, denial or use of family and medical care leave, and any other factor made unlawful by federal, state, or local law. SYRWCD ID#1 also prohibits discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on a combination of two or more of these protected characteristics. SYRWCD ID#1 further prohibits discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on a perception that the person has any of these protected characteristics, or any combination of characteristics, or that the person is associated with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any of these protected characteristics, or any combination of characteristics.

SYRWCD ID#1 strongly disapproves of and will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination against employees by managers, supervisors, or co-workers, as well as by third parties in the workplace or with whom the employee comes into contact in connection with her or his employment. This policy applies to all SYRWCD ID#1 employees, paid or unpaid interns, volunteers, and any other persons providing services to SYRWCD ID#1 pursuant to a contract.

Harassment includes verbal, physical, and visual conduct, as well as communication through electronic media of any type, that creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile working environment or interferes with work performance. Such conduct constitutes harassment when (1) submission to the conduct is made either an explicit or implicit condition of employment; (2) submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision; or (3) the harassment interferes with an employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Harassing conduct can take many forms and includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, statements, gestures, pictures, or cartoons regarding an employee's sex, race (inclusive of traits associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, national origin, religion, age, physical disability, medical condition, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity veteran status, or other protected status.

**SECTION 4(24). VOICE MAIL, E-MAIL, CELL PHONE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

Change fifth paragraph of this section to read as follows:

Voicemail and e-mail messages, as well as any other information transmitted over the computer system, may not contain material that may reasonably be considered offensive or disruptive to any employee. Offensive messages or material includes, but is not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, gender-specific comments or any comments that might offend someone on account of his or her age, sex, sexual orientation, race (inclusive of traits associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles), religious or political beliefs, national origin, physical or mental disability, or other protected characteristic.



**Section 3(17). VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT OR STALKING AND OTHER CRIMES**

Legislation effective January 1, 2025 greatly expanded the rights of employees to take unpaid leave when they or a family member are a victim of a crime. Among other things, the definition of what is a crime, who is a family member, and the purpose for which employees can take unpaid time off of work have been expanded, and employees are allowed to use sick leave as well as vacation time when taking time off,. Employees must be informed of these rights upon hire, annually, upon request and any time an employees informed their employer that the employee or their family member is a victim of a crime. The Civil Rights Department is to develop a form about these rights by July 1, 2025, and until then there is no notice requirement pertaining to this revised leave statute. When that brochure comes out we suggest including it as an attachment in the Manual. Until then, we suggest the following minor revision:

In addition to providing time off to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking and other crimes and abuse as required by law, and not discriminating or retaliating against such employees as provided by law, SYRWCD ID#1 further makes reasonable accommodation for employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking or other crimes and abuse as required by law who requests an accommodation for the safety of the employee while at work to the extent provided by law.

**Section 4(5). IMPROPER EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

The example of improper conduct at subsection “p” is revised to reflect new legislation that provides job postings, applications and similar employment documents may not include a statement that the applicant must have a driver’s license unless there is a reasonable expectation that driving is a job function, there is a reasonable expectation that using alternate form of transportation would not be comparable in travel time or cost to employer. Job descriptions should be reviewed to confirm that the requirement of holding a driver’s license meets these standards. Also, the example of improper conduct found at subsection “p” should be revised as follows:

- p) Failure to obtain and maintain a current license or certificate when required as a condition of employment.

**RESOLUTION NO. 850**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE  
SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO. 1  
AMENDING THE DISTRICT'S PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL**

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees previously adopted, and has subsequently updated and revised, by Resolutions, the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 ("District") Personnel Policy Manual, which sets forth certain terms and conditions of employment for employees of the District; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees desires to update and revise certain provisions of the Personnel Policy Manual, including but not limited to, revisions to ensure compliance with new and revised employment standards under federal and state law, as applicable; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees has the authority to adopt updates, revisions, and amendments to the Personnel Policy Manual; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees has reviewed the proposed revisions to the Personnel Policy Manual, including Section 1.5 - Equal Employment Opportunity, Section 3.17 - Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking and Other Crimes, Section 4.17 - Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Prevention Policy, Section 4.24 - Voice Mail, E-Mail, Cell Phone and Technology Policy, and Section 4.5 - Improper Employee Conduct, which revisions are attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, as follows:

1. Revisions to Section 1.5 - Equal Employment Opportunity, Section 3.17 - Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking and Other Crimes, Section 4.17 - Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation Prevention Policy, Section 4.24 - Voice Mail, E-Mail, Cell Phone and Technology Policy, and Section 4.5 - Improper Employee Conduct, within the District's Personnel Policy Manual are approved, adopted, and incorporated into the personnel policies and procedures of the District.
2. Except where otherwise required by contract or law, the provisions of the District's Personnel Policy Manual shall apply to and govern the terms and conditions of employment of all current and future employees of the District, and a copy of the Personnel Policy Manual and any revisions and additions thereto shall be provided to all current employees of the District and shall be provided to all new employees immediately upon hire.
3. The General Manager, working in conjunction with his or her designee(s), is hereby authorized to implement the policies, provisions, and procedures of the District's Personnel Policy Manual.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect immediately.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, being the duly qualified President and Secretary, respectively, of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly adopted and passed by the Board of Trustees of said District at a Regular meeting held on January 21, 2025 by the following roll call vote:

AYES, and in favor thereof, Trustees:

NOES, Trustees:	None
ABSENT, Trustees:	None

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Clay, President

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Racel Cota, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

# STRADLING YOCCA CARLSON & RAUTH, LLP

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Racel Cota

**FILE NUMBER:** 102870-0001

**FROM:** Jeffrey A. Dinkin  
Lindsay Bowden

**DATE:** December 30, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Suggested Revisions to Personnel Policy Manual

---

We have reviewed the District's Personnel Policy Manual and have the following suggested revisions based on an assessment of existing policies and changes in the law since the last review of the Manual.

First, California Senate Bill 1815 removes "historically" from the definition of "race," and defines race to include traits associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles, and adds definitions for "race" and "protective hairstyle." Under California Senate Bill 1137, discrimination is prohibited not just on basis of individual protected traits, but is now prohibited on basis of intersectionality, which is the combination of two or more protected traits. Accordingly, it is recommended that the following language be added to the Manual in following sections that have been redlined below:

### SECTION 1(5). EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

SYRWCD ID#1 supports equal employment opportunities and does not unlawfully discriminate against its employees or applicants because of their actual or perceived race (inclusive of traits associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, religious creed, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions), sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ancestry, age (40 and above), marital status, military or veteran status, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, citizenship status, or any other basis protected by law. SYRWCD ID#1 also does not unlawfully discriminate based on a combination of two or more of these protected characteristics. SYRWCD ID#1 also makes reasonable accommodations for legally disabled employees unless to do so would constitute an undue hardship. Finally, SYRWCD ID#1 prohibits the harassment of any individual based on any of the categories listed above. This policy applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, compensation, benefits and other programs.

### SECTION 4(17). HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND RETALIATION PREVENTION POLICY

SYRWCD ID#1 is committed to providing a workplace free of sexual harassment or discrimination (which includes harassment or discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions) as well as unlawful harassment or discrimination based on such factors as race (inclusive of traits associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, religious creed,



national origin, ancestry, age for individuals over forty years of age, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, citizenship status, military and veteran status, denial or use of family and medical care leave, and any other factor made unlawful by federal, state, or local law. SYRWCD ID#1 also prohibits discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on a combination of two or more of these protected characteristics. SYRWCD ID#1 further prohibits discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on a perception that the person has any of these protected characteristics, or any combination of characteristics, or that the person is associated with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any of these protected characteristics, or any combination of characteristics.

SYRWCD ID#1 strongly disapproves of and will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination against employees by managers, supervisors, or co-workers, as well as by third parties in the workplace or with whom the employee comes into contact in connection with her or his employment. This policy applies to all SYRWCD ID#1 employees, paid or unpaid interns, volunteers, and any other persons providing services to SYRWCD ID#1 pursuant to a contract.

Harassment includes verbal, physical, and visual conduct, as well as communication through electronic media of any type, that creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile working environment or interferes with work performance. Such conduct constitutes harassment when (1) submission to the conduct is made either an explicit or implicit condition of employment; (2) submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision; or (3) the harassment interferes with an employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Harassing conduct can take many forms and includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, statements, gestures, pictures, or cartoons regarding an employee's sex, race (inclusive of traits associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, national origin, religion, age, physical disability, medical condition, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity veteran status, or other protected status.

**SECTION 4(24). VOICE MAIL, E-MAIL, CELL PHONE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

Change fifth paragraph of this section to read as follows:

Voicemail and e-mail messages, as well as any other information transmitted over the computer system, may not contain material that may reasonably be considered offensive or disruptive to any employee. Offensive messages or material includes, but is not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, gender-specific comments or any comments that might offend someone on account of his or her age, sex, sexual orientation, race (inclusive of traits associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles), religious or political beliefs, national origin, physical or mental disability, or other protected characteristic.

### **Section 3(17). VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT OR STALKING AND OTHER CRIMES**

Legislation effective January 1, 2025 greatly expanded the rights of employees to take unpaid leave when they or a family member are a victim of a crime. Among other things, the definition of what is a crime, who is a family member, and the purpose for which employees can take unpaid time off of work have been expanded, and employees are allowed to use sick leave as well as vacation time when taking time off. Employees must be informed of these rights upon hire, annually, upon request and any time an employees informed their employer that the employee or their family member is a victim of a crime. The Civil Rights Department is to develop a form about these rights by July 1, 2025, and until then there is no notice requirement pertaining to this revised leave statute. When that brochure comes out we suggest including it as an attachment in the Manual. Until then, we suggest the following minor revision:

In addition to providing time off to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking and other crimes and abuse as required by law, and not discriminating or retaliating against such employees as provided by law, SYRWCD ID#1 further makes reasonable accommodation for employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking or other crimes and abuse as required by law who requests an accommodation for the safety of the employee while at work to the extent provided by law.

### **Section 4(5). IMPROPER EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

The example of improper conduct at subsection “p” is revised to reflect new legislation that provides job postings, applications and similar employment documents may not include a statement that the applicant must have a driver’s license unless there is a reasonable expectation that driving is a job function, there is a reasonable expectation that using alternate form of transportation would not be comparable in travel time or cost to employer. Job descriptions should be reviewed to confirm that the requirement of holding a driver’s license meets these standards. Also, the example of improper conduct found at subsection “p” should be revised as follows:

- p) Failure to obtain and maintain a current license or certificate when required as a condition of employment.

**NOTICE AND AGENDA OF SPECIAL MEETING**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER VALLEY GROUNDWATER BASIN  
EASTERN MANAGEMENT AREA GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY**

**HELD AT  
SANTA YNEZ COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT, MEETING ROOM  
1070 FARADAY STREET, SANTA YNEZ, CALIFORNIA  
6:30 P.M., THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2024**

---

**Optional remote public participation is available via Telephone or TEAMS**

To access the meeting via telephone, please dial: +1 469-998-7311, 209762335# or via the Web at: [Join the meeting now](#)

**“Join a Meeting” - Meeting ID 294 811 517 405 Meeting Passcode: 4nNRT3**

**\*\*\* Please Note \*\*\***

The above teleconference option for public participation is being offered as a convenience only and may limit or otherwise prevent your access to and participation in the meeting due to disruption or unavailability of the teleconference line. If any such disruption of unavailability occurs for any reason the meeting will not be suspended, terminated, or continued. Therefore in-person attendance of the meeting is strongly encouraged.

---

**AGENDA OF SPECIAL MEETING**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda
3. Public Comment (Any member of the public may address the Board relating to any non-agenda matter within the Board’s jurisdiction. The total time for all public comment shall not exceed fifteen minutes and the time allotted for each individual shall not exceed five minutes. No action will be taken by the Board at this meeting on any public comment item.)
4. Consent Agenda
  - a. Review and consider approval of meeting minutes for the October 24, 2024 EMA GSA Board Meeting
  - b. Review and consider approval of Financial Statements and Warrant List for Q1 FY 2024/25
  - c. Receive presentation of new, approved well permits for the EMA GSA
5. Receive informational presentation from Fisher Pump on well metering
6. Receive informational presentation from Water Resource Economics on EMA GSA Rate Study
7. Receive presentation of proposed Prop 68 Round 2 Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant EMA GSA Implementation Plan and provide direction to EMA GSA Staff
8. Verbal update on EMA GSA Set-up/Transfer and other initiatives
9. Consider Date/Time for Next Regular and/or Special Meetings of the EMA GSA
10. Board of Directors Reports and Requests for Future Agenda Items
11. Adjournment



# Monthly Briefing

*A Summary of the Alliance's Recent and Upcoming Activities and Important Water News*

## Congress Passes CR and WRDA as Lame Duck Session Ends

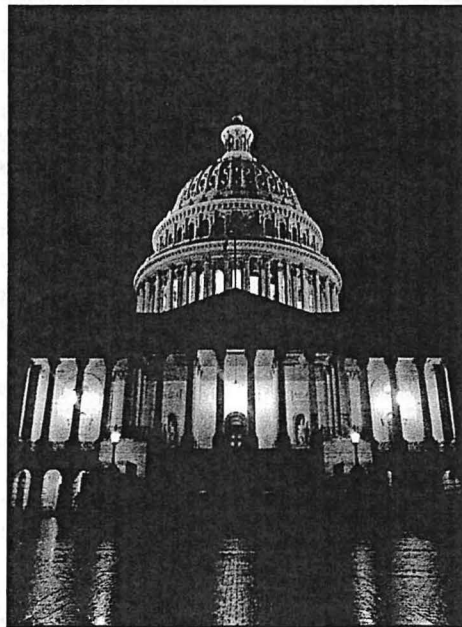
The U.S. Senate passed, and President Biden signed a House-passed Continuing Resolution (CR) through March 14, 2025, barely averting a government shutdown. Just days earlier, Congress passed the 2024 Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA), sending it to President Biden's desk to sign into law.

In the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress' last action of the year, the Senate passed a funding patch early in the morning of December 21 with more than \$110 billion in disaster aid.

The end result retained some of the initial bipartisan accord negotiated earlier, including funding the government at current levels through March 14, more than \$110 billion in disaster aid and a one-year farm bill extension of agriculture and food policy.

The slimmed-down plan from House Republicans, led by Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.), was the third attempt at passing a stopgap spending bill. Shortly after the funding bill passed the House, Speaker Johnson told reporters that he was "grateful" that members of Congress passed the CR.

"We encourage swift passage in the Senate now," he said. "They need to do their job as the House just did."



Lengthy negotiations between Republicans and Democrats led to the public release of a much different 1,547-page agreement three days earlier. The Speaker quickly pulled the bill after President-elect Donald Trump and advisor Elon Musk weighed in, opposing the bill and urging the Speaker to suspend the federal debt limit.

At the behest of President-elect Trump, Speaker Johnson produced a smaller bill with a suspension of the debt limit through January 30, 2027. That bill failed on the floor by a vote of 174-235-1, with 38 Republicans voting against and two Democrats voting for it.

### Continuing Resolution

The third time proved to be the charm, as the Speaker presented yet another new, 118-page measure, dropping President-elect Trump's debt limit request, which passed the House less than 6 hours before the looming government shutdown by a vote of 366-34-1.

Key components of the CR include short-term funding of the government until March 14, 2025, disaster relief, funding for farmers and ranchers struggling without a new farm bill, and extensions to certain key government programs.

*Continued on Page 2*

### STORIES INSIDE.....

	<u>Page #</u>
119th Congress—Recent Leadership Moves	3
A Flurry of Activity as Biden-Harris Administration Comes to a Close	5
Alliance "Road Map" Lays out Policy Guidance for Trump Landing Team	7
"A Path to Food Security: The Imperative of the <i>Western Water Road Map</i> " - Guest Column by William Bourdeau	8
Controversial White House Groundwater Report Finalized in the 11th Hour	9
FWS Withdraws Controversial BIDEH Rule	10
Monarch Butterfly Proposed for "Threatened" Listing under the ESA	10
CVP Water Users Object to Reclamation's Action Plan for Long-term Operations	11
Piping of Canals Affirmed in Ninth Circuit Court Ruling	11
Deadline to Apply for Alliance Executive Director Position Approaches	12
Sponsorship Opportunity! Be Featured in our Next Annual Report	14
A Big "Thank You" to our New and Supporting Members!	15

## Continuing Resolution Passes on Third Try (Cont'd from Pg. 1)

Republican negotiators in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress will now be in a position to push through some of their priorities on climate and nutrition policies in the farm bill, although they'll still need bipartisan support to pass the reauthorization.

"The committee's going to work very hard to get it done in a very bipartisan way," incoming Senate Agriculture Committee Chair John Boozman (R-Ark.) told *POLITICO* recently. "What members are understanding right now is the very difficult situation that farmers are in right now."

The package included \$100.4 billion in supplemental emergency assistance for disaster relief programs following the hurricane and flood seasons. An additional \$10 billion is provided in economic aid to farmers.

The CR includes \$33.5 billion to the Department of Agriculture, including \$21 billion in assistance payments to farmers and producers for losses resulting from droughts, wildfires, hurricanes, freezes, and other severe weather events in the 2023 and 2024 calendar years.

Another \$10 billion in assistance was provided to farmers where the gross return was less than the expected cost of production and \$2.1 billion in emergency funding is included for watershed protection, restoration, and conservation.

Extensions to several programs and authorities were also authorized through March 14, 2025, including the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program.

"Congress must now pass full FY 2025 appropriations bills by April 30, 2025, to avoid an automatic 1 percent spending cut across the board under the June 2023 debt-limit deal," said Mark Limbaugh, the Family Farm Alliance's representative in Washington, D.C.

### Permitting Reforms Out of Spending Package

Efforts to attach energy permitting reform to the bill also faltered due to disagreements over changes to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Negotiations on permitting reforms, led by Senators Joe Manchin (I-WV), John Barrasso (R-WYOMING), and Tom Carper (D-DE), and House Natural Resource Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-AR), made progress but were halted by House Speaker Johnson.

Democrats aimed to use reforms to facilitate renewable energy projects, while House Republicans sought pro-fossil-fuel provisions, with both sides unable to reach consensus.

"Senators Manchin and Barrasso's bill, which only passed out of committee and not the full Senate, addressed some reforms but needed the House NEPA provisions to strengthen it," said Rep. Westerman. "Ultimately, progress stalled because of a failure to agree on legislative text that would have fixed the broken process."

### Congress Passes 2024 WRDA

A few days before the CR passed, the Senate approved the 2024 *Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)*, which was

previously approved by the House on December 10 by a vote of 399 to 18.

"Getting this legislation signed into law means that Congress has maintained the schedule of regularly passing *WRDA* improvements and reforms every two years," said House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO). "WRDA 2024 makes much needed reforms at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to streamline processes, reduce cumbersome red tape, and get projects done faster. The bill also provides critical water resource infrastructure improvements for communities across America – from ports to levees to navigation channels, and more."

It now goes to the President to be signed into law.

WRDA authorizes the Army Corps of Engineers to undertake locally-driven infrastructure and water resources projects that also deliver regional and national benefits, move goods throughout the country, protect communities from flooding, and more.

The water resources bill, which guides Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) projects for two years, focuses on flood protection, navigation, and ecosystem restoration.

Key highlights of the bill include:

- **New Projects:** Authorization of 17 new projects, including a \$2.7 billion storm risk reduction in Miami.
- **Feasibility Studies:** Directing the Army Corps to conduct over 200 studies on flood control, wastewater improvement, and climate-resilient water infrastructure.
- **Streamlining Corps Processes:** Measures to reduce bureaucracy, expedite project timelines, and incorporate conservation and drought resiliency into existing dam operations.
- **National Dam Safety Program:** Reauthorization through 2028, with maintenance requirements for federally funded dam projects.
- **Broader Benefits:** The bill aims to enhance ports, levees, navigation channels, and public buildings while addressing the impacts of extreme weather and improving federal infrastructure utilization.

WRDA 2024 was named after retiring Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Chair Tom Carper (D-DE), who negotiated the bill along with other bipartisan congressional leaders.

### Other Western Water Legislation

The Senate on December 19 passed the *Urban Canal Modernization Act*, which would allow Bureau of Reclamation aging infrastructure funding to help address repairs for urban canals with extraordinary maintenance issues.

Many western canals, like the New York Canal in Idaho's Treasure Valley, have gone from being rural in nature to surrounded by urban infrastructure over time.

Continued on Page 4



# 119<sup>th</sup> Congress: Recent Leadership Moves

Republican leaders in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress are debating how best to advance President-elect Donald Trump's agenda, as both parties tee up their choices for committee leadership slots for the next legislative session.

Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) picked up a key endorsement from President-elect Donald Trump in his bid to serve another term. Mr. Johnson faced some resistance from Hill conservatives ahead of the January 3 vote, but Mr. Trump's backing helped stifle other opposition, and Speaker Johnson was re-elected in a close vote.

"He will do the right thing, and we will continue to WIN. Mike has my Complete & Total Endorsement," Mr. Trump wrote in a social media post.

## Speaker Johnson Navigating Budget Reconciliation

Speaker Johnson is navigating a tough decision on advancing President-elect Donald Trump's legislative agenda in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress, particularly on budget reconciliation bills addressing border security, tax cuts, and other GOP priorities.

Trump allies and Senate GOP leaders favor two separate bills, starting with border security, but House Republicans, led by Ways and Means Chair Jason Smith (R-MO), are pushing for a single comprehensive package to include tax cuts, energy policy, and spending reductions.

"A big task of mine is threading the needle to pass this legislation when you're looking at the smallest majority period of any party since pre-World War I," Rep. Smith said. "And so we got a little bit of a challenge before us."

Supporters of a single bill argue it simplifies negotiations among GOP factions and increases the chances of passing Trump's tax plan.

Budget Chair Jodey Arrington (R-TX) suggested that if two bills are pursued, the first must be narrow and move quickly, leaving broader policies for a second package.

Senate leaders, including Lindsey Graham (R-SC), advocate prioritizing a security-focused bill to address urgent border and national security concerns.

"While I support spending restrictions and tax cuts, my top priority – and the first order of business in the Senate Budget Committee – is to secure a broken border," the incoming leader of the Budget Committee said. "The bill will be transformational, it will be paid for, and it will go first."

It remains to be seen what policy changes will be able to be legislated in the reconciliation process as the Senate Parliamentarian will be the official gatekeeper to decide which provisions will be included or not pass the test, called a "Byrd-Bath" named after the late Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV).

Provisions in budget reconciliation must affect revenues or spending to be considered in order.

## House GOP Chairs of T&I and E&C Committees

Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO) has secured a second term as chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, with oversight over the Department of Transportation, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency, after the Republican Steering Committee granted him a waiver to bypass term limits.

Rep. Graves, who previously served two terms as ranking member and one as chair, emphasized his ability to quickly implement President-elect Trump's infrastructure priorities, including a surface transportation bill.

"The Committee will hit the ground running in 2025," said Chairman Graves. "Our work will include working with President Trump to advance his infrastructure priorities, developing the next long-term surface transportation reauthorization, and reprioritizing policies that are consistent with the core purpose of infrastructure in the first place – moving people and goods safely and efficiently throughout our country."

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-AR) withdrew from the race, leaving Rep. Graves unopposed. Graves hinted at changes within subcommittee leadership, with Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC), a loyal ally, likely to see a promotion.

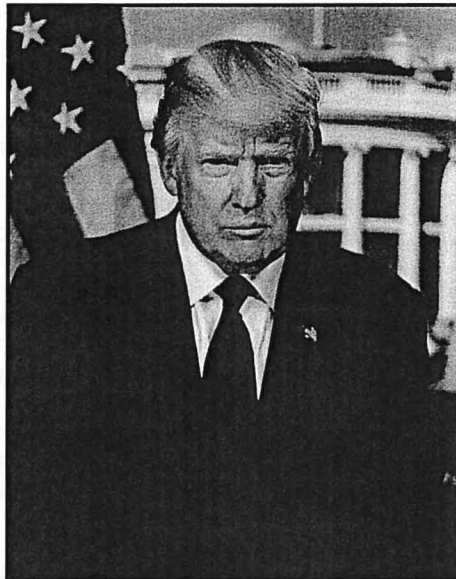
"T&I is a committee where Members can roll up their sleeves and get things done for the American people, and I look forward to getting back to work with my committee colleagues and the Trump Administration to do just that," said Chairman Graves.

Kentucky Republican Rep. Brett Guthrie was approved as the next House Energy and Commerce (E&C) Committee chairman by his GOP colleagues over his lone competitor, Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH), during a House Republican Steering Committee vote last month.

The incoming chair has pledged to focus on "energy dominance" in leading the panel and plans to push permitting reform and climate rollbacks in the next Congress.

"We must work together to restore America's energy dominance and lower energy prices, protect children's online safety and ensure America remains the world leader in technological innovation, and protect access to life-saving treatments while lowering health care costs," said Rep. Guthrie.

He is set to replace retiring Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WASHINGTON).



*President-elect Donald Trump endorsed House Speaker Mike Johnson in his bid to serve another term. (Library of Congress portrait)*

Continued on Page 4

## Senate Passes Two Western Water Bills (*Cont'd from Page 2*)

In addition to Idaho Republican Senators Risch and Crapo, *the Urban Canal Modernization Act* was cosponsored by U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OREGON).

“The urban canal bill will now go into the next Congress in good shape,” said Mr. Limbaugh. “There is also a good basis for a federal lands and water package to move in the next Congress, as well.”

Another Western water bill that will be signed into law by President Biden is H.R. 7938, led by Senator Ron Wyden (D-OREGON) and Rep. Cliff Bentz (R-OREGON), which fulfills financial and regulatory commitments made years ago to Klamath Project irrigators. The Republican-led urban canal legislation needed to be tied to a Democrat-led bill for realistic passage in the Senate on the evening of December 19. Senator Wyden quickly stepped up on the Senate floor, made a motion, and the Senate passed H.R. 7938, as well as the urban canal bill.

Under the legislation, federal agencies would not be allowed to pass on the costs of operating or maintaining Link River and Keno Dams. This infrastructure was built and operated for generations by PacifiCorp, which also operated four hydroelectric generation facilities at downstream locations on the Klamath River.

With the downstream hydropower dams being removed, the Bureau of Reclamation agreed to take over Link River and Keno Dams, but Klamath Project irrigators in California and Oregon were concerned they would be asked to pick up the costs of operating and repairing the remaining infrastructure, which still provides multiple public benefits.

“With this legislation being enacted, farmers and ranchers cannot be stuck with that financial burden,” said Klamath Water Users Association Executive Director and Counsel Paul Simmons.

Representative Bentz carried the legislation in the House of Representatives, where it passed on December 19. The bill is headed to President Biden’s desk where it will become law.

“There is a lot to be said for the success that can come from bipartisan, bicameral, bi-state, leadership and relationships,” said Mr. Simmons.

### House Passes ‘Midnight Rules’ Legislation

The House passed the contentious “*Midnight Rules Relief Act*” (H.R. 115) which would allow Congress to overturn multiple Biden Administration regulations in a single resolution (*see related story, Page 5*). Introduced by Rep. Andy Biggs (R-ARIZONA), the bill expands the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to target rules issued during the last 60 legislative days of a president’s term.

“In 2024 alone, the Biden Administration has imposed more than \$1.34 trillion in regulatory costs, and that number will continue to grow until they leave office,” said Rep. Biggs. “Many of these rules are out of step with the mandate the American people gave us in November, and the tools provided under this Act will allow them to be swiftly addressed.”

Currently, CRA resolutions can only address one rule at a time.

The measure, which did not get traction in the Senate, would give the incoming GOP-led Congress and Trump administration sweeping power to scrap recent Biden administration regulations.

Critics, including environmental groups, oppose the measure, citing concerns over rapid regulatory rollbacks.

*Continued on Page 14*

## Leadership News in the 119th Congress (*Cont'd from Page 3*)

### House Dems Decide Contested Ranking Member Races

House Democrats are challenging the long-standing seniority system for committee leadership, with several races for top Democratic spots on key panels. The Democratic Steering Committee has decided ranking member roles on the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Oversight and Accountability Committees.

“This shift reflects growing sentiment for a balance between experience and fresh perspectives,” said Mark Limbaugh with The Ferguson Group, the Alliance’s representative in Washington, D.C.

For the Natural Resources Committee ranking member slot, Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CALIFORNIA), an environmental attorney, was chosen over Rep. Melanie Stansbury (D-NEW MEXICO), despite her claim of significant federal experience.

“It is the honor of my lifetime to win this election and be named Ranking Member of the Natural Resources Commit-

tee,” said Rep. Huffman. “My entire career has been centered around natural resources – from my time as an attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council to the past twelve years serving on this committee.”

The Center for Biological Diversity, CalTrout and other environmental organizations formally endorsed Mr. Huffman in the race to lead Democrats on the Committee.

In the Agriculture Committee, Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN) beat Jim Costa (D-CALIFORNIA) in unseating ranking member David Scott (D-GA), whose ability to continue to serve in committee leadership has raised concerns.

Mr. Costa received key endorsements from the Family Farm Alliance and over 70 agricultural organizations when he made a similar, and also unsuccessful bid to chair the committee in 2020.

In the Oversight and Accountability Committee: Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA), a ten-year veteran, won out over Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), even though she had support from the Progressive and Hispanic caucuses.

## A Flurry of Activity as Biden Administration Comes to a Close

The Biden-Harris Administration comes to an end on January 20, and a flurry of spending announcements and proposed regulations are being rolled out before the departing administration turns out the lights.

### Bureau of Reclamation Funding Announcements

The Bureau of Reclamation to date has announced more than \$3.2 billion from Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) for 222 drought mitigation projects, 39 domestic water supply projects, seven emergency relief projects for Tribal communities and four canal improvement projects.

Reclamation has also announced more than \$5.3 billion from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) for almost 600 projects.

The Family Farm Alliance was part of a five-organization steering committee that led over 220 water and agriculture organizations who played a critical role in securing the IIJA and IRA funding for Western water infrastructure and drought mitigation efforts.

In its latest round of funding announcements, Reclamation last month awarded nearly \$12.1 million to support collaborative planning and design projects to improve water sustainability and efficiency. Reclamation selected a total of 43 projects in 11 states to receive the funding from the IIJA, IRA and annual appropriations through Reclamation’s WaterSMART program.

“These investments will assist our partners in planning and design of water-related projects to improve water management and drought resiliency,” said Deputy Commissioner Roque Sanchez. “These types of projects are key in helping communities in the West to combat impacts of long-term drought.”

The projects selected are in California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. Partners will plan and design a variety of water supply enhancement projects including those to enhance groundwater discharge, design recycled water infrastructure, pipe water to reduce water losses, design backup infrastructure to domestic water supply and expand water reuse. To view a full list of projects, visit the Reclamation website.

Reclamation in December also announced a \$13 million investment from the IIJA in two projects to improve ecosystems, increase resilience and remove barriers to fish passage in California. California Trout Corporation will receive \$8

million in funding for the Harvey Diversion Fish Passage Remediation Project and the Yurok Tribe will receive \$5 million for the restoration of the Shovel, Jenny, Falls, and Spencer Creeks streams in the Klamath Basin.

“These investments through President Biden’s Investing in America agenda will help to improve our ecosystems while mitigating impacts of drought and building climate resiliency,” said Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton. “These projects in California will improve habitat for fish and will remove barriers to restore movement in river systems.”

To date, Reclamation has allocated nearly \$150 million in funding to these types of “transformational ecosystem restoration projects” through the WaterSMART Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program. A funding opportunity to allocate an additional \$100 million in funding was posted to [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) on December 10th, 2024.

### Reclamation Increases Max Grant for Recycling Projects

In response to a July 2024 request made by Senator Alex Padilla (D-CALIFORNIA) and nearly 30 other lawmakers, Reclamation has increased federal funding for large-scale water recycling projects to \$40

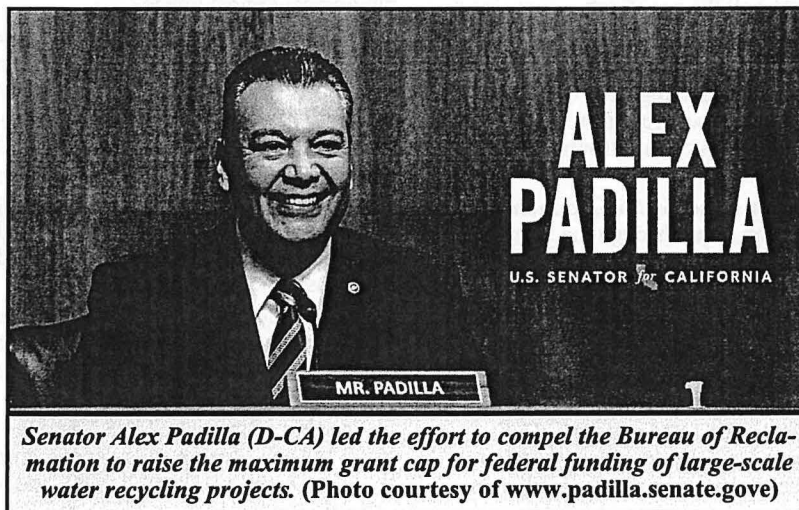
million per project, up from \$30 million, to address rising construction costs.

“As the West continues to recover from the impacts of long-term drought while also preparing for inevitable future droughts, it is imperative that the federal government continues to invest in local water supplies to meet the demands of recycled water in the West,” the lawmakers wrote in a July 12, 2024 letter to Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton.

The cap increase, authorized under a 1996 law, follows a prior adjustment in 2022.

“Reclamation recognizes that project costs for many water infrastructure projects have increased significantly in recent years,” Commissioner Touton responded in a Dec. 6 letter. “Based on a review of project costs, as well the expected availability of funding to support the current number of applicable projects, we agree that a further increase in the project ceiling to \$40 million is appropriate.”

The funding boost aims to strengthen local water supplies, reduce dependence on the Colorado River and other drought plagued river basins, and improve drought resilience in the West.



Continued on Page 6



## End of Administration Actions (Cont'd from Pg. 6)

### USDA Awards \$335 Million for Forest Projects

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) last month announced awards of nearly \$335 million in IRA funds to strengthen financial incentives for private forest landowners to manage their forests sustainably and to permanently conserve private forests in partnership with states.

"Forests provide innumerable benefits to people and communities, and private forestlands make up more than half of all forests in the U.S.," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, we are helping to provide the resources private forest landowners need to keep working forests working so that future generations of Americans will be able to enjoy all the benefits they provide."

The funded proposals add financial incentives and opportunities to landowners to adopt sustainable forest management practices. Forest management, like thinning trees or removing invasive species, helps to reduce the susceptibility to forest pests and disease and lowers the risks of catastrophic wildfires.

These projects are in addition to nearly \$420 million to conserve more than half a million acres through the Forest Legacy Program in 2024 alone.

### EPA: \$1.6 B for Environmental & Climate Justice Grants

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) last month announced it has selected 105 applications for the Community Change Grants Program, totaling nearly \$1.6 billion in IRA funds to advance local, on-the-ground projects that reduce pollution, increase community climate resilience, and build community capacity.

"On day one of his Administration, President Biden promised to target investments to communities that for too long have been shut out of federal funding," said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan. "These selections will create jobs, improve public health, and uplift community efforts in all corners of this country, regardless of geography or background."

Of the 105 total selections, 32 are for Target Investment Areas, totaling \$600 million. Target Investment Area funding is intended to ensure that Community Change Grants Program funding is directed towards disadvantaged communities with unique circumstances, geography, and needs.

The agency received approximately 2,700 applications, totaling over \$40 billion in requested funds and over 2,495 requests for technical assistance. EPA is on track to obligate the majority of selected Community Change grants by January 2025.

### Recent Agency ESA Decisions

Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections for four West Coast salmon and steelhead species will remain in place for at least five more years, as NOAA Fisheries' reviews show some recovery progress but highlight ongoing challenges.

The species—California coastal chinook salmon, central California coast steelhead, California Central Valley steel-

head, and Southern Oregon/Northern California coast coho salmon—continue to face habitat loss, climate change impacts, and historical degradation, according to NOAA Fisheries.

NOAA emphasized the need for continued restoration efforts, including dam removal and habitat improvements, while acknowledging threats from climate change. The announcement coincided with the Biden Administration's \$99 million commitment to salmon conservation and climate resilience projects.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has proposed new ESA protections and critical habitat designations for multiple species, including mussels, salamanders, and monarch butterflies (*see related story, Page 10*), with potentially wide-ranging ecological impacts.

Nearly 4,000 river miles are proposed as critical habitat for the rayed bean, sheepnose, snuffbox, and spectaclecase mussels, all listed as endangered since 2012. The habitat designation aims to address threats like pollution and habitat loss, with recovery costs estimated at \$166.4 million over 50 years.

The FWS plans to list the eastern hellbender salamander (also known as a "snot otter") as endangered due to habitat loss, declining water quality, and illegal collection. Critical habitat designation was deemed imprudent to avoid revealing locations to pet trade collectors.

According to the FWS, these actions aim to protect species vital to freshwater ecosystems and raise awareness of broader conservation challenges tied to habitat loss and environmental degradation.

In other actions, the FWS listed the Peñasco least chipmunk in New Mexico as endangered under the ESA, designating 4,386 acres as critical habitat, and added three Brazilian butterfly species to the endangered list.

FWS also announced that the Rio Grande cutthroat trout does not warrant ESA protection, despite a 26-year history of litigation and advocacy for its listing. Found in 119 stream locations across New Mexico and Colorado, the trout is deemed resilient, with conservation efforts mitigating threats such as hybridization, nonnative trout, and climate risks.

Critics argue the decision ignores ongoing threats like warming streams and intensified wildfires.

"It can wipe populations out when there's fire," said Noah Greenwald with the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), which helped drive the listing petition. "The only thing you can do is to grab fish and then hopefully bring them back."

CBD is still considering whether to challenge the rejection of its listing petition.

In response to the perceived accelerated rulemaking being advanced by the outgoing administration, House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.) last month sent five letters to outgoing Biden administration agency officials to ensure they comply with all record retention requirements and avoid last-minute partisan rulemaking in advance of the incoming Trump administration. One such letter was directed at the Department of Interior (DOI), which houses FWS.

*Continued on Page 7*

*Page 6*

## Alliance “Road Map” Lays out Policy Guidance for Trump Landing Team

The Family Farm Alliance board of directors last month approved the 2024 *Road Map for Western Water*, a report that details specific steps that the new Administration can take immediately upon assuming office.

“This report provides specific recommendations on how the Administration can modernize agency implementation of decades-old environmental laws,” said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen. “It provides guidance on how process and permitting can be streamlined and water project construction can be expedited. And it details measures that can expand our clean, hydropower production capability and revive our dead and dying Western forests in headwater regions.”

The *Road Map* document builds around these recommendations, with background information that focuses on global food insecurity and the unique nature of the American West.

“Western irrigated agriculture provides a huge annual boost to our economy,” said Alliance President Paul Orme, whose family owns and operates a farm in Central Arizona. “It also provides important habitat for western waterfowl and other wildlife, and its open spaces are treasured by citizens throughout the West.”

The Alliance has shared the Road Map with select, key members of the incoming Trump Administration’s “landing team”.

The incoming Trump Administration’s transition team has begun sending names of landing team members to the Biden White House as part of preparations to assume control of federal agencies after President-elect Donald Trump’s inaugura-

tion on January 20.

“These teams, delayed due to a late transition agreement, will gather information and draft policy plans for the Administration’s first 100-200 days,” said Mark Limbaugh, the Family Farm Alliance’s representative in Washington, D.C.

While some agencies, such as the EPA, are ready to engage, others, including the Energy and Interior Departments, have not yet received information about incoming teams. The process echoes the prior Trump Administration’s use of landing and “beachhead” teams to implement the president’s agenda while awaiting permanent appointments.

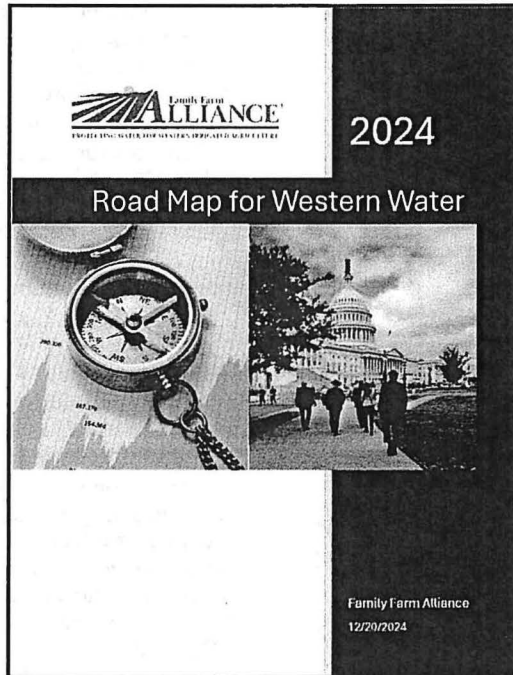
President-elect Trump did recently announce that he’d nominate Stephen Vaden, a judge on the U.S. Court of International Trade, to be deputy secretary of USDA.

Mr. Vaden was USDA’s general counsel during President Trump’s first administration and a member of the board of the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Brooke Rollins, Mr. Trump’s nominee for Agriculture Secretary has been making the rounds on Capitol Hill in advance of her Senate confirmation hearing, according to *POLITICO*. Ms.

Rollins and Mr. Trump reportedly have a very close personal relationship, which gives hope to Republican Senators who advocate for farmers and ranchers.

“She’s gonna be in President Trump’s ear,” said Sen. Roger Marshall (R-KANSAS) told *POLITICO Ag Morning*. “She’s one of those people that’s just relentless. And I think that she’ll be right there fighting for American farmers.”



## Recent Agency ESA Decisions (Continued from Page 6)

“Our nation’s natural resources, public lands, and DOI itself do not benefit from last-minute partisan rulemaking attempts,” said Chairman Westerman. “Thus, we encourage you to refrain from such attempts.”

### Biden EPA to Finalize Wetlands Permitting Rule Soon

The Biden Administration is finalizing a rule intended to streamline the process (not updated since 1988) for states and tribes to assume authority over federally regulated wetlands permitting, a responsibility currently managed by the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers in most states.

The proposed rule aims to clarify and improve state-level permitting but has raised concerns among environmental ad-

vocates about insufficient safeguards.

Critics cite Florida’s controversial takeover of wetlands permitting under the previous Trump Administration as an example of potential risks, which was revoked by a court as running afoul of the ESA.

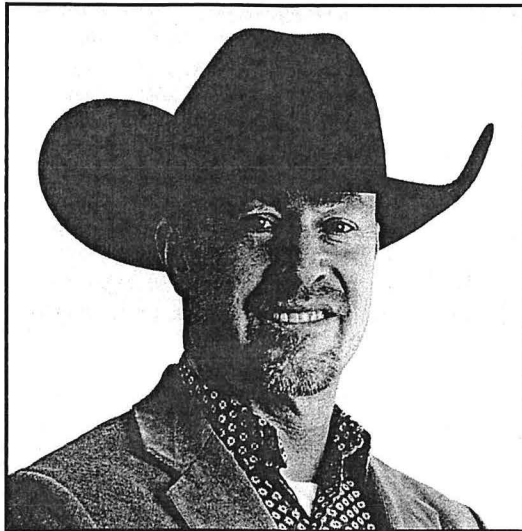
“No state can be allowed to take over a federal program as important as the Clean Water Act’s wetlands permitting program by making an end run around the Endangered Species Act,” Christina Reichert, an attorney at Earthjustice who represented the plaintiffs, said in a statement at the time of the Florida court ruling.

The final rule’s release date remains uncertain but was scheduled for November in the Biden Administration’s Unified Regulatory Agenda.



## A Path to Food Security: The Imperative of the *Western Water Roadmap*

Guest Column by William Bourdeau



Imagine a future where empty grocery store shelves reflect the collapse of American agriculture—a stark reality driven by a broken water system in the arid West. This is not a distant dystopia; it's a trajectory we must change. The Family Farm Alliance's *Roadmap for Western Water* offers a bold vision to ensure a resilient, sustainable water future for the region that feeds our nation.

As the Trump transition team considers the roadmap's pivotal recommendations, it is imperative to act decisively. Regulatory reforms and infrastructure investments are not just vital for Western agriculture; they underpin America's ability to maintain a secure and sustainable domestic food supply. The stakes could not be higher.

For decades, outdated and fragmented water management policies have hamstrung efforts to address growing water demands. Federal agencies such as the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operate in silos, creating inefficiencies and conflicting priorities. Farmers, ranchers, and water managers are left navigating inconsistent regulations and delays in project approvals.

The *Roadmap* proposes streamlining federal permitting processes for water infrastructure projects. Currently, essential initiatives such as building reservoirs or modernizing irrigation canals are delayed by years of bureaucratic red tape. This inaction jeopardizes food security and leaves farmers facing uncertain water allocations. By expediting permitting and fostering inter-agency collaboration, we can ensure timely delivery of water to the fields that produce America's fruits, vegetables, and nuts.

Western agriculture supplies over half of the nation's fresh produce and tree nuts, contributing billions annually to the U.S. economy. Yet, persistent droughts and regulatory constraints have placed the industry under siege. For example, the Endangered Species Act (ESA), while essential for conserva-

tion, often prioritizes species protection over agricultural water use. This results in severe shortages for farmers.

The *Roadmap* advocates for balancing environmental protections with agricultural needs. Strategies such as habitat restoration alongside sustainable water allocations can achieve both ecological and economic goals. Policymakers must embrace these integrated approaches to sustain ecosystems without sacrificing food production.

Infrastructure investment is at the heart of the *Roadmap's* vision. New projects such as the Sites Reservoir in California, which promises 1.5 million acre-feet of additional water storage, are critical for drought resilience. Public-private partnerships can provide the funding and momentum needed to bring these projects to fruition.

Modernizing existing infrastructure is equally important. Aging dams, canals, and pipelines waste billions of gallons of water annually due to leaks and inefficiencies. By adopting advanced technologies such as automated gates, remote sensing, and telemetry systems, water districts can optimize delivery systems, reducing waste and operational costs.

Innovation has already transformed water use in agriculture. Technologies like drip irrigation, soil moisture sensors, and drought-tolerant crop varieties enable farmers to produce more with less water. Federal incentives for adopting these technologies can accelerate their impact. For instance, precision irrigation has been shown to reduce water use by up to 30% while increasing crop yields. Scaling such solutions nationwide would revolutionize water efficiency in agriculture.

The implications of these reforms extend beyond the Western states. A robust domestic food supply is a cornerstone of national security. Climate change and global supply chain disruptions have underscored the risks of relying on foreign imports. By ensuring water reliability in the West, we protect America's capacity to feed its population and remain a global agricultural leader.

The *Roadmap for Western Water* is not just a technical document; it is a lifeline for the future of American agriculture. By uniting federal agencies, state governments, and private stakeholders, we can build a water system that works for everyone. The Trump administration has a unique opportunity to act boldly, transforming water policy into a cornerstone of American resilience.

When you pick up a watermelon, a head of lettuce, or a handful of pistachios, you benefit from the hard work of Western farmers who rely on reliable water supplies. Let us honor their labor by embracing the roadmap's vision and ensuring that future generations enjoy a secure, sustainable, and abundant food supply. The time to act is now.

*William Bourdeau - a fifth-generation Central Valley native, born and raised in Coalinga, California - is a Board Member of the Family Farm Alliance. He has been around farming his entire life and currently works for Harris Farms overseeing over 20,000 acres of diversified crops. He is also founder and CEO of Bourdeau Farms LLC.*

## Controversial White House Groundwater Report Finalized in the 11<sup>th</sup> Hour

With just over one month of control remaining for the Biden-Harris Administration, the White House finalized a controversial report that calls for a “comprehensive and informed” federal approach to groundwater management, while suggesting that depletion of groundwater used in the Western U.S. for agricultural purposes has “national and global consequences”.

“The significance of groundwater as a critical asset demands a forward-looking approach rooted in proactive efforts that include more coordination, shared knowledge, scientific innovations, and adaptability to protect groundwater,” the White House said in a December 14 statement.

The report was finalized in December, despite requests from several Western government officials and stakeholders to pause further action on the report until PCAST answered key questions.

A discussion on the December 1, 2023 Zoom meeting found on the White House’s website references projects in California, Arizona, Colorado, and Idaho and refers to agriculture as “the elephant in the room” and “the culprit” of depleted aquifers.

The Family Farm Alliance and others in Western agriculture throughout the past year expressed concerns with this type of characterization, which found its way into the final PCAST report.

“In the western U.S., groundwater resources are being depleted at alarming rates, mostly from agricultural withdrawal,” the final report states. “...The depletion has national and global consequences as non-renewable groundwater in the west is embedded in agricultural products transported to the rest of the U. S. and in agricultural commodities exported globally.”

The report’s recommendations, however, are fairly benign and not particularly revelatory. They include investing in research, data collection, modeling and prediction, as well as innovative technologies to understand and protect groundwater reserves. The report also recommends federal incentives to encourage the planning and sustainable management of groundwater, as well as active collaboration with stakeholders and training of the workforce.

“Only through a comprehensive and informed approach can we secure groundwater for future generations and maintain the health and prosperity of our nation and its citizens,” the report concludes.

The Alliance last July wrote a letter to PCAST in response to the Council’s request for public input on America’s groundwater challenges. The Alliance’s letter emphasized that groundwater should remain regulated by states and local interests, not the federal government. Later that month, the PCAST Groundwater Working Group hosted a one-day workshop at Arizona State University (ASU) in Tempe to aid in the formulation of the policy recommendation report.

Several Alliance members from the Southwest participated in that forum.

A few weeks after the event in Tempe, the *New York Times* ran a guest column authored by ASU professor Dr. Jay Famiglietti, who asserted that the Northeastern U.S. would have their water poached by Western states if a national water policy isn’t adopted.

The *Chicago Tribune* in September ran a similar scare piece – “No, American West, You Can’t Have Our Great Lakes Water” - driven by the *New York Times* opinion piece.

Other Western interests had differing views.

Western House Republicans later in the year raised concerns with the PCAST effort, stating they “staunchly oppose this effort to impede state, local, and Tribal regulatory authority.”

The Congressional letter was signed by Rep. Dan Newhouse (WASHINGTON), Cliff Bentz (OREGON), Andy Biggs (ARIZONA), Jake Ellzey (TEXAS), Russ Fulcher (IDAHO) and Mike Simpson (IDAHO).

Idaho Governor Brad Little and Lt. Governor Scott Bedke sent a similar letter to President Biden and Vice President Harris expressing concern about the PCAST groundwater effort, including their observation that the council prematurely concluded that “the agriculture industry needs to be the focal point of your groundwater grab, prior to even receiving any feedback”.

The Western States Water Council (WSWC) also submitted a letter to the PCAST Groundwater Working Group in July, noting that States are in the best position to protect groundwater quality and quantity and have demonstrated the ability to do so. The letter emphasized that States have exclusive authority over the allocation and administration of groundwater rights located within their borders.

“The WSWC opposes any and all efforts that would establish a federal ownership interest in groundwater not otherwise recognized or allowed under state law, or diminish the primary and exclusive authority of States over groundwater...,” the WSWC letter reads. “No future administrative initiatives should attempt to usurp States’ rights and prerogatives related to the management and protection of groundwater resources.”

Supporters of the PCAST report like Mr. Famiglietti – who is listed as an “external expert” consulted as the report was being prepared – continue to cheerlead the effort.

The report is “a beacon for the future of groundwater management,” Mr. Famiglietti told the *Los Angeles Times* last month. “Its recommendations are comprehensive and forward looking, and if implemented over time, can be a game-changer for groundwater sustainability in the United States.”

He told the *Times* he thinks the White House report is “one of the most important groundwater documents ever written in the United States.”

Others question the timing of the report and its ultimate usefulness.

“I simply cannot see how the Trump administration would lend any credence to a rushed report released so late in the lame duck term,” said one Western water attorney who wished to remain anonymous.

## FWS Withdraws Controversial BIDEH Rule

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) last month announced the withdrawal of their proposed Biological Integrity, Diversity, and Environmental Health (BIDEH) rule, a move that was supported by the Family Farm Alliance and other Western water interests.

"The fact that some of the most litigious anti-farming and ranching organizations were supportive of this proposed regulation speaks volumes," said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen.

A key concern with the proposed regulation is that the notice of rulemaking recites reductions in wildlife populations and climate change but does not link the specific policy changes to these underlying concerns.

"In reality, agriculture and human settlement have long been tied to ecologically important wetland and riparian resources and the water they provide," Mr. Keppen said.

If it had been finalized, the rule would have made sweeping changes to the ability of refuge managers to utilize key management tools. The proposed rule stated that certain practices, such as native predator control and cooperative agriculture, would be prohibited unless refuge managers

fully evaluate the potential environmental effects of the management activity in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

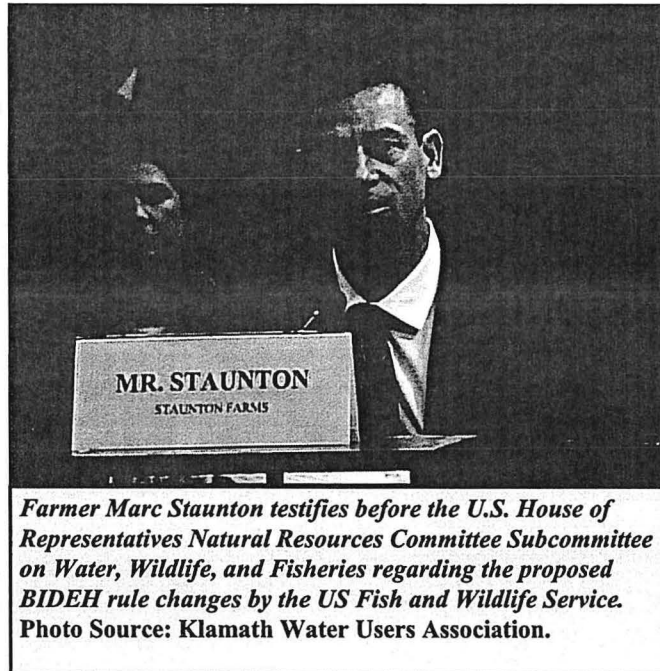
In addition, refuge managers would have also been required to complete a comprehensive analysis to justify that utilizing the management practices is necessary to meet statutory responsibilities, fulfill refuge purposes and ensure BIDEH. This could have created management paralysis in the refuge system.

The House Natural Resources Committee in 2024 conducted a series of oversight and legislative efforts on the rule since it was proposed in February. These included an oversight hearing in April held by the Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries where representatives from State game and fish agencies, agriculture producers, and conservation organizations testified in opposition to the proposed rule.

The Alliance submitted written testimony for the hearing, which was incorporated into the public

record.

"The BIDEH rule was a completely misguided approach to management of the National Wildlife Refuge System," said Subcommittee Chairman Cliff Bentz (R-OREGON). "I welcome the withdrawal of the rule and will continue to push back on policies that put politics over practical management."



*Farmer Marc Staunton testifies before the U.S. House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries regarding the proposed BIDEH rule changes by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.*

Photo Source: Klamath Water Users Association.

## Monarch Butterfly Proposed for "Threatened" Listing under the ESA

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) last month opened a 90-day public comment period on listing the monarch butterfly as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), citing population declines of 80% for eastern monarchs and 95% for western monarchs since the 1980s.

The proposal includes designating 4,395 acres in California as critical habitat for overwintering western monarchs.

Listing the butterfly as "threatened" provides FWS with more flexibility on implementing ESA regulations, something that was noted with cautious optimism by farm organizations.

"This opens the door for an important dialogue about farmers as caretakers and cultivators of the land," Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall said in a statement.

The Family Farm Alliance was one of several Western agricultural organizations who participated in a November 2024 virtual briefing with FWS leaders on the pending listing announcement.

"The threatened listing is much more flexible than an endangered designation and allows the use of Section 4(d) of the ESA," said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen. "In this case, agricultural practices and forest management practices will be exempt, and hopefully FWS can apply a light touch to regulating land uses."

Take, as defined under the ESA means "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." Incidental take is an unintentional, but not unexpected, taking. This form of take occurs when a listed species is "taken" (i.e., harassed, harmed, pursued, etc.) incidentally to an otherwise lawful activity.

"In other words, while taking of the listed species occurs as a result of the activity, taking of the listed species is not the primary intent of the activity," said Mr. Keppen.

Continued on Page 13



## CVP Water Users Object to Reclamation's Action Plan for Long-Term Ops

The Bureau of Reclamation last month approved a new plan for the Long-Term Operation of the Central Valley Project (CVP) and Delta facilities of the State Water Project (SWP).

The Biden Administration claims the plan presents a path forward with more predictable actions for endangered fish species and more reliable CVP response to multi-year droughts. Some CVP water customers, however, claim the plan prioritizes "politics over science".

The revised operating plan includes a new framework for Shasta Reservoir operations to benefit winter-run Chinook salmon; revised operational criteria for Delta exports; and supports early implementation of components to provide more Delta outflow and habitat restoration in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta.

The plan was completed in coordination with partners from the California Department of Water Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Efforts to complete the updated operating plan spanned three years and included regular engagement and feedback from interested parties.

"The resilience of the Central Valley Project, with its importance to the agricultural industry and drinking water deliveries across California, is critical to the state's water supply future," said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Mike Brain. "The revised operating plan will improve regulatory certainty for water users and provide a more stable water supply for communities, farms, and fish."

Some CVP water users disagree.

The Friant Water Authority (FWA), which represents the majority of Friant Division water users and maintains and operates the Friant-Kern Canal on the east side of the San Joaquin Valley, claims the final Record of Decision (ROD) issued by the Biden Administration "blatantly" politicizes the biological opinions for long-term CVP operations.

"This decision comes despite repeated warnings from water users, community leaders, and interest groups about the severe dangers of prioritizing politics over science," FWA said in a public statement. "By forcing this decision on a politically driven timeline, the administration has shown a disregard for the collaborative and science-based processes essential to effectively managing California's water resources."

Water users elsewhere in the San Joaquin Valley also expressed concerns.

"Today's action by Reclamation elicits mixed reactions – On the one hand it attempts to better align coordination between the Central Valley Project and State Water Project operations", said Federico Barajas, Executive Director of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (SLDMWA). "On the other hand, the selected operations regime will reduce surface water supply reliability for the communities, farms, and ecosystems reliant on water provided by the Water Authority's member agencies by nearly 100,000 acre-feet annually, complicating efforts of our members to provide affordable surface water supplies and sustainably manage groundwater."

Over the past 30 years, the SLDMWA's member agencies have faced a sharp decline in water supply reliability, disproportionately impacting frontline communities in the western San Joaquin Valley.

"Unfortunately, the adoption of the selected operations regime continues this disproportionate trend," said Mr. Barajas.

SLDMWA claims that the proposed plan includes actions that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has determined do not provide the intended benefit to species but do have a significant water supply impact.

"The Water Authority looks forward to working with Reclamation and other stakeholders to improve the selected operations regime through adaptive management and to continue to work collaboratively to improve conditions for and ultimately recover species of concern," said Mr. Barajas.

## Piping of Canals Affirmed in Ninth Circuit Court Ruling

A three-member panel of the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on December 18 issued an opinion in *Smith, et al. v. Tumalo Irrigation District, et al.*, affirming U.S. District Court for Oregon rulings concerning the piping of irrigation district canals and laterals.

This ruling clarifies that Tumalo Irrigation District (TID) does have the right to make necessary improvements to modernize its water infrastructure and minimize seepage losses within the district's easements.

"No evidence suggests that the original parties to the express easement contemplated that the irrigation system would benefit plaintiffs' property with seepage from open canals," the 9th Circuit's ruling said.

The ruling provides certainty to the district and to other districts throughout the West who are undertaking similar projects.

"This ruling affirming the District's right to make im-

provements to the canals and improve water delivery helps with TID's mission to effectively manage water resources to meet the present and future needs of its patrons in ways that are economically and environmentally responsible," said Chris Schull, TID district manager. "The District's priorities are improving water delivery efficiencies, conservation, and preserving and restoring native habitats in the Deschutes Basin."

TID is located in Deschutes County (OREGON) and serves irrigation water for growing grass, hay, lavender, vegetables, and forages for livestock. The district serves 700 patrons on over 7,400 acres of land.

The Ninth Circuit also affirmed the October 2023, U.S. District Court decision clarifying that the U.S. Natural Re-

*Continued on Page 13*

## Deadline to Apply for Alliance E.D. Position Approaches

The recruitment time frame for the Family Farm Alliance executive director position closes at 5:00 p.m. (Mountain Time) on Friday, January 31, 2025.

The Alliance board of directors last October announced that it has initiated a nationwide search for a new executive director. Dan Keppen (OREGON), who has served as the organization's executive director since March 2005, announced at that time that he intends to step down from his current position at the Alliance's October 2025 annual meeting in Reno (NEVADA).

A job announcement webpage, which includes a link to the recruitment brochure and related press announcements, can be accessed at <https://www.familyfarmalliance.org/ed/>.

The Alliance, a 501-c-6 non-profit incorporated in Arizona in 1991, is a grassroots organization composed of family farmers, irrigation districts, and those in related industries throughout the Western states. The Alliance is dedicated to the protection and enhancement of irrigated agriculture.

The Alliance was formed to ensure that its members' views are regularly communicated to elected officials, regulatory agencies and to the general public. The Alliance works closely with individual farmers and ranchers as well as other organizations that have common interests to ensure efforts to promote western irrigated agriculture are aligned, efficient, and effective.

The principal objective of the Alliance is to help ensure the continued availability of adequate irrigation water supplies to Western farmers.

The organization's founders' commitment to the Alliance is prevalent today as they continue to build the organization to carry their vision forward, a vision which is now embraced by members in 16 Western states. The Alliance is seen by many water resource stakeholders and policy makers as a key player in the context of Western water resource management and how this important function is impacted by federal laws and regulations.

The organization has a proven track record of successful

engagement with federal policymakers that includes 99 invitations to appear before Congress since 2005.

The Executive Director executes the policy direction provided by a board of directors who are active ranchers or farmers from throughout the Western United States. Technical support and guidance are provided by an Advisory Committee

made up of over 40 irrigation district managers, engineers, attorneys, association leaders, and other industry professionals.

All Alliance staff work – including that of the Executive Director – is done under contract, to maintain flexibility and concentrate Alliance funding on achieving its mission.

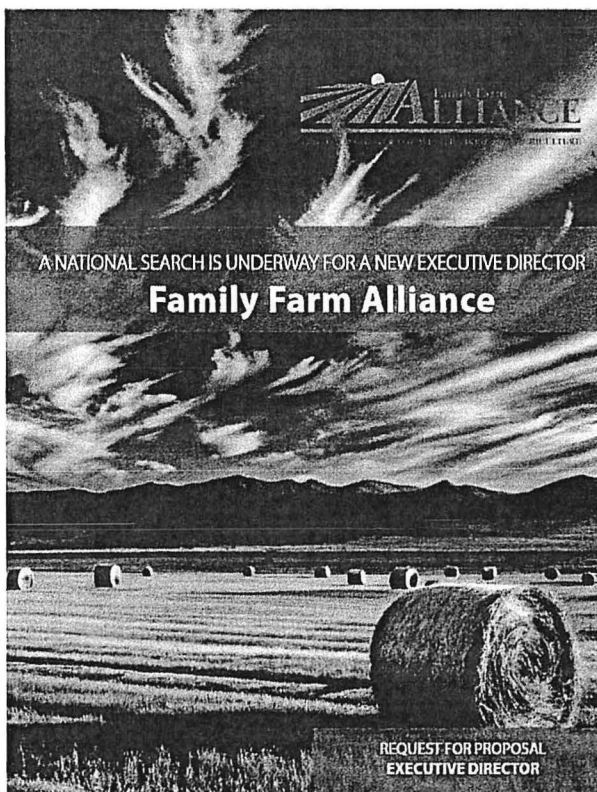
The board of directors officially announced its search to seek proposals from individuals and/or firms with demonstrated experience to serve as Executive Director under contract.

Establishing a transparent process to hire a new executive director and board leadership transition were identified as top Alliance priorities last February. A strategic board retreat was held in Colorado in July, where a search committee was established to develop timelines, milestones and deliverables associated with finding a new executive director by mid-summer 2025.

"The retreat also served as a kick-off to begin the board's succession discussion, which will continue until late summer 2025, with input from the incoming executive director," said First Vice-President Don Schwindt (COLORADO), who is chairing the Executive Director Search Committee. "Our goal is to find a great candidate with strong passion for the Alliance's mission statement that will bring his or her unique attributes to continue strengthening our membership advocacy moving forward."

An executive director recruitment package, which provides information about the organization, request for proposal, qualities emphasized by the board of directors for the ideal candidate, qualifications, and nomination and application procedures, can be downloaded from the Alliance job search webpage.

Interested candidates are encouraged to apply by emailing a compelling cover letter, comprehensive resume, and list of three references to [KAulenbacher@parsonsbehle.com](mailto:KAulenbacher@parsonsbehle.com).





## Piping of Canals Upheld in Ninth Circuit (Cont'd from Pg 11)

sources Conservation Service did not violate the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the court's previous findings that the NEPA analysis adequately addressed the alternatives to piping, the economic impacts, and the cumulative effects.

"This decision ensures that districts in Oregon and throughout the Western United States can move forward with modernizing their water delivery infrastructure, maximizing opportunities for increased water efficiency, conservation, and resiliency, which benefits farmers, rural communities, and the environment," said April Snell, Executive Director of the Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC).

OWRC filed an amicus brief in support of the district, in partnership with the Idaho Water Users Association, Washington State Water Resources Association, Wyoming Association of Irrigation Districts, and the Deschutes Basin Board of Control.

The decision also confirms that piping the canals does not constitute a private nuisance and TID is not responsible for property devaluation, if any, resulting from the conversion.

This case resulted from a group of Tumalo Irrigation District patrons challenging TID's right to pipe in federal court. The U.S. District Court did not agree with the plaintiff's allegations and the matter was appealed to the US. Ninth Circuit.

The case was successfully argued by Mark Reinecke of the law firm Bryant, Lovlien & Jarvis.

"The Ninth Circuit panel clearly understood the need, the practicalities, and irrigation district easement rights finding that the limitations suggested by the plaintiff property owners would lead to the absurd result that right-of-way holders could not perform necessary construction of and maintenance on natural ground canals and laterals, which would be contrary to common sense, the purpose of the statute, and longstanding practice," said Mr. Reinecke.

Now that the Ninth Circuit has agreed with the lower court rulings, TID is focused on moving forward with completing its multi-phase infrastructure improvements. Once completed, the improvements will result in increased water efficiency for farmers and water conservation that benefits federally protected endangered species and provides other benefits.

## Monarch Butterfly Listing (Continued from Page 10)

While the "prohibitions" in the proposed 4(d) rule for the monarch butterfly would generally protect the monarch butterfly from almost all take (if finalized), the proposed 4(d) rule allows some forms of take to occur through its inclusion of "exceptions." These allowed forms of take include incidental take resulting from activities that maintain, enhance, remove, or establish milkweed and nectar plants within the breeding and migratory range that do not result in conversion of native or naturalized grassland, shrubland, or forested habitats.

Some of these specific activities include habitat restoration and management activities that sustain grassland, shrubland, or forested land with monarch butterfly habitat, live-stock grazing and routine ranching activities, and routine agricultural activities on lands already in production.

In short, if the 4(d) rule were to be finalized as proposed, as long as there is no federal nexus, private citizens, private entities, and states would be able to carry out the activities listed in the proposed listing, whether or not they result in the take of monarch butterflies.

The 4(d) rule stays silent on pesticides. However, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will administer Section 7 consultation on herbicide, insecticide and pesticide product registrations under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, which could take a number of years.

EPA's recent herbicide guidelines are finished, and insecticide guidelines should be done by March. The agency's strategies regarding pesticide and herbicide use have raised

concerns with agricultural organizations and agencies across the country.

Many agricultural landowners in California are currently adapting to implementation of the state's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). For many, this adaptation includes developing both solar and groundwater recharge projects, proposals which could potentially be designed to complement monarch recovery efforts.

FWS is actively seeking input on its proposed rule during the 60-day comment period.

"While the public can comment on any aspect of the proposed rule, FWS is specifically asking for public input or additional information on some key issues," said Mr. Keppen.

Among these asks are feedback on specific prohibitions and exceptions contained in the proposed 4(d) rule, including exceptions related to milkweed management and pesticide use.

Final rulemaking is anticipated for December 2025.

Western Republicans in Congress used the listing announcement as an opportunity to highlight the need for reforming the ESA.

"The Endangered Species Act is in dire need of reform, and this listing by the Fish and Wildlife Service only further drives home this point," said Senator Cynthia Lummis (R-WYOMING). "As Republicans prepare to control the Senate, House, and White House next year, I look forward to prioritizing legislative and administrative reforms that will protect species without hindering economic development."

**Movement on Western Water Bills (Continued from Pg 4)**

**President Signs Other Water Bills into Law**

President Biden on December 23 signed a number of other water bills into law, including two bills introduced by Rep. Joe Neguse (D-COLORADO), the Drought Preparedness Act (H.R. 4385) and the Water Monitoring and Tracking Essential Resources (WATER) Data Improvement Act (H.R. 5770).

“Droughts threaten our water supplies, devastate our crops, and have countless other impacts on the daily lives of folks who call Colorado and the American West home,” said Rep. Neguse. “And I am so incredibly proud to see our pro-

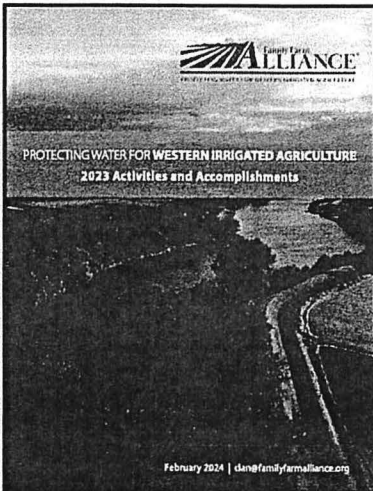
posals to address the severe impacts of record-breaking drought get enacted into law.”

The Family Farm Alliance supported H.R. 4385, which extends the authorization of the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991, also referred to as the “Drought Act”.

“The Drought Act provides Reclamation with the tools it needs to help states plan for and mitigate the impacts of droughts in the West. Many of our members have benefited from the Drought Act in the past to help drill wells, install temporary pipelines and haul water during drought periods,” said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen.



**Sponsorship Opportunity!**



**We are offering a unique opportunity to sponsor the next Family Farm Alliance Annual Report and help support the Alliance!**

An advertisement in the upcoming Annual Report, to be published in February, will reach a wide audience of family farmers, ranchers, irrigation districts, and allied industries in 16 Western states and lawmakers and policy makers in Washington, D.C. Sponsoring the Annual Report is a great way to show support for the Alliance and the mission to ensure the availability of reliable, affordable irrigation water supplies to Western farmers and ranchers. **The following sponsorships are available for advertisements in the Alliance 2024 Annual Report:**

- **Platinum Sponsor (\$1000; Full Page Ad)**
- **Gold Sponsor (\$500; Half Page Ad)**
- **Silver Sponsor (\$250; Quarter Page Ad)**
- **Bronze Sponsor (\$100; Business Card Ad)**

Deadline for ad submission is January 31. Submit ad copy and requests for more information via email to [jane@familyfarmalliance.org](mailto:jane@familyfarmalliance.org), or call Jane at (916)-206-7186.

A Big Thank You to Our New and Supporting Members!

NOVEMBER through MID-DECEMBER 2024

DEFENDER (\$1000-\$4999)

Association of California Water Agencies

PARTNER (\$500-\$999)

Nate Eckloff (NE)

Bingham Ground Water District (ID)

Daniel Hoekstra (AZ)

Kogovsek & Associates (CO)

L.J. Olsen, Inc. (WA)

Uncompaghre Valley Water Users (CO)

SUPPORTER (\$250-\$499)

Jon Rubin (CA)

Karen Henderson (ID)

Schnepf Farms (AZ)

Next Gen Water, Inc. (CA)

Steve Moore Farms (CA)

DONOR SUPPORT

Make your tax-deductible gift to the Alliance today! Grassroots membership is vital to our organization. Thank you in advance for your loyal support.

If you have questions, please call our fundraising coordinator, Jane Townsend, at (916)206-7186 OR EMAIL jane@familyfarmalliance.org

OR EMAIL jane@familyfarmalliance.org



Protecting Water for Western Irrigated Agriculture

Contributions can also be mailed directly to:  
Family Farm Alliance  
P.O. Box 1705  
Clearlake Oaks, CA 95423

SAME GREAT PROGRAM...SAME GREAT LOCATION....NEW DATE!



2025 Annual Meeting and Conference

October 30-31, 2025 Reno, NV



**CORRESPONDENCE LIST**  
**JANUARY 2025**

1. December 10, 2024 - Water Service Requirements letter sent for APN 139-040-045
2. December 12, 2024 - Notice and Agenda received from the Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board for the December 16, 2024 Regular Board Meeting
3. December 13, 2024 - Letter from District to three customers regarding backflow testing requirement
4. December 14, 2024 - Notice and Agenda received from the Santa Ynez Community Services District for the December 18, 2024 Regular Board Meeting
5. December 14, 2024 - Notice and Agenda received from the Santa Ynez Community Services District for the December 18, 2024 Special Board Meeting
6. December 19, 2024 - Can and Will Serve letter sent for APN 135-230-026
7. December 20, 2024 - Existing Water Service letter sent for APN 137-390-003
8. December 27, 2024 - 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2024 District Update
9. December 30, 2024 -Letter received from Santa Barbara County Fire Department regarding Fire Service Requirements for APN 135-200-003
10. January 2, 2025 - Notice and Agenda received from the Central Coast Water Authority or the January 9, 2025 Operating Committee Meeting
11. January 7, 2025 - District sent a Delinquent Payment notice to four customers
12. January 8, 2025 - Notice of meeting cancellation of the Los Olivos Community Services District Board Meeting on January 8, 2025.
13. January 8, 2025 - Letters from District to 37 customers regarding backflow testing requirement
14. January 8, 2025 - Existing Water Service/Can and Will Serve letter sent for APN 137-610-004
15. January 9, 2025 - Existing Water Service/Can and Will Serve letter sent for APN 141-111-024
16. January 10, 2025 - Final Notice for backflow testing requirement sent to one customer
17. January 13, 2025 - Notice and Agenda received from the Santa Ynez Community Services District for the January 15, 2025 Regular Board Meeting