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Executive Director
Michael Wade

TO: San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Board of Directors

FROM: Mike Wade, Executive Director

DATE: August 27, 2025

RE: Program and Activities Update

Great Valley Farm Water Partnership

I attended the August 13 meeting of the Great Valley Farm Water Partnership at the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority headquarters in Los Banos. The guest speaker for the meeting was Jacob McQuirk, Principal Engineer at DWR. He spoke on the process and challenges of conducting a sediment removal project in the Delta. Citing his prior experience, he stated that small sediment removal projects could take two years to obtain the permits and do the work. Efforts to streamline the process, such as getting a programmatic permit approval process is a much bigger lift, he said, involving CEQA and NEPA approval as well as programmatic inclusion in the biological opinions. He also said that sediment removal will change the hydrodynamics of the Delta, which could cause bigger problems than the ones being fixed by removing the sediment. McQuirk said it could take three years and \$5 million to simply set up the streamlined process, not counting any actual work to dredge the most troublesome channels.

News Media

The Coalition produced several letters and opinion pieces this month on current issues under discussion in the public sphere. So far, in 2025, the Coalition has produced and submitted 16 pieces to media outlets with 12 being published, a 75% publication rate.

Desert Sun – Dan Keppen of the Family Farm Alliance and I co-authored a piece on food security and the value of delivering water to western farms.

Blog – I authored a blog for the Coalition web site, asking the question: “Will the Bay-Delta Plan Succeed? It has a Good Chance if the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Alternative is Allowed to Work.” The piece also ran as an article on LinkedIn and received positive comments by our followers.

Livermore Independent – A letter was submitted pushing back against the paper’s editorial portraying farmers as wasteful and unimportant to the economy. It further expressed the importance of Sites Reservoir as a project that will benefit the people of California, including the agricultural areas surrounding the paper’s publication footprint in Livermore.

Fresno Bee – A letter was submitted to the Fresno Bee about subsidence and the San Luis Canal. The Coalition made the case that State and federal agencies should be on the hook for damage caused by subsidence due to increased groundwater pumping following the implementation of CVPIA. In the letter, we accurately point out that the 2001 CVPIA Record of Decision (ROD) specifically acknowledged that the Act would lead farmers who lost surface water supplies to pump more groundwater, which, the ROD said, would directly result in subsidence.

The Desert Review – An op-ed was submitted on the rising tensions surrounding negotiations over the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines on the Colorado River. The essay discussed the intrinsic value of alfalfa as a globally important crop and that targeting it as wasteful is shortsighted, especially with its value to the Imperial Valley’s overall economy and America’s food supply.

Social Media Metrics

The Coalition's social media program includes outreach through multiple consumer and industry-targeted accounts. The following charts represent Coalition social media outreach and education from January 1 through August 23, 2025. During that time, we had 15.54 million impressions, reaching 5.75 million accounts. Impressions represent the number of times an ad was displayed, with reach representing the number of people, or accounts, that saw the ad or social media post.

About 72% of our audience reach consisted of people between the ages 25 and 44, 89.3% of which were women. Approximately 45% of impressions were in the Los Angeles DMA (Designated Market Area). The San Francisco Bay Area accounted for 19.3%, with Sacramento/Stockton/Modesto at 15.2%.

