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Executive Director
Michael Wade

TO: San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Board of Directors
FROM: Mike Wade, Executive Director
DATE: July 8, 2024
RE: Program and Activities Update

Public Outreach and Education

CFWC is beginning work on a new messaging program that focuses on common water supply issues throughout California's Great Central Valley. From dismal Sacramento Valley water supplies in 2022 to 50% allocations south of the Delta this year, the impact that inflexible regulations are having on California farmers is extraordinary. A focused, educational approach on the causes and potential solutions to perennial water supply shortages is aimed at reaching consumers, elected officials, public agency boards, and the media with specific information for each audience.

BizFed Conference – Los Angeles

I spoke on a panel at the Southern California Business Federation (BizFed) conference on June 26 on Los Angeles. The title for the panel was "Water Resiliency Forum: Water as an Economic Engine". Others included on the panel were SLDMWA Vice-Chair William Bourdeau and Nina Hawk, Chief of Bay-Delta Resources and Group Manager of Bay-Delta Initiatives for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

The panel was designed to bring different perspectives on some of the challenges faced by agricultural water managers and how agricultural and urban partnerships can work to improve water supply reliability and the economics tied to rural industries. I led off with an overview of the size and scope of California's agricultural industry and delved into the problems consumers face with an increasing reliance on foreign-produced food supplies. Our dependence on foreign-produced food products is growing. Since 1980, fresh fruit imports have doubled, and fresh vegetable imports have quadrupled. Our dependence on producers in other countries reflects a growing risk to disruptions, production failures, plus pesticide use and labor practices that don't meet California standards.

The key to agriculture's success in California is providing the resources farmers need to stay productive and keep farmland producing food. That includes updating policies that give agencies like the Bureau of Reclamation more flexibility managing Delta exports in years like 2024 to avoid future 40% - 50% or lower allocations.

William Bourdeau discussed groundwater recharge as well as the barriers farmers face getting into farming. He pointed out the positive aspects of the newly signed MOU with Metropolitan Water District of Southern California to begin discussions on mutually beneficial water management practices in the San Joaquin Valley.

MWD's Nina Hawk provided background on a long-term collaboration MWD has engaged in with agricultural agencies and tribes along the Colorado River to conserve water, including how MWD pays farmers to conserve water through programs such as land fallowing and crop rotation.

CFWC Highway Signs

New highway banners have been delivered to Stone Land Company and Arvin-Edison Water Storage District. CFWC offers both the traditional green and white, "Food Grows Where Water Flows" banners as well as full color versions with a variety of different slogans in support of dairy, nuts, cotton, fresh fruits, and fresh vegetables. CFWC will provide banners at no charge to members willing to place them in prominent locations. Contact the CFWC office at (916) 391-5030 for additional information on different options for obtaining a banner.