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#### **Executive Director**

**Michael Wade**

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

**FROM:** Mike Wade, Executive Director

**DATE:** December 8, 2025

**RE:** Program and Activities Update

### **Coalition Selects Next Executive Director**

The California Farm Water Coalition is entering an important new chapter with the appointment of Michelle Paul as its next executive director. Her selection comes after a comprehensive statewide search that brought forward a wide range of talented candidates committed to California agriculture.



Michelle brings nearly 20 years of experience working directly with farmers, ranchers, and agricultural leaders across California and Washington, D.C. She has built her career around amplifying the voices of agricultural producers. As Vice President of Marketing and Outreach at AgWest Farm Credit, she led initiatives connecting young and beginning farmers with critical resources and helped position the organization as a trusted voice in agricultural policy. Her background also includes public affairs, federal advocacy, and service on the boards of the California Agricultural Council and the Center for Land-Based Learning.

Michelle is slated to begin her new role on January 13 and assume full responsibilities on March 1 following my retirement, after having served as executive director since 1998.

### **2025 CFWC Impact Report**

Coalition staff are currently finalizing our 2025 Impact Report, which will provide a comprehensive overview of the Coalition's work and public outreach over the past year. The report includes updates on education and paid media programs, including Cultivate California, along with a detailed media report summarizing editorial and opinion content produced and published throughout the year. It will recognize the many individuals and organizations whose support, leadership, and participation helped strengthen the Coalition's efforts to effectively represent irrigated agriculture with the public and policymakers, and much more. The report will be distributed electronically to all members in early January.

### **Awards and Recognition**

I was recently honored to receive two unexpected awards this year — the Family Farm Alliance's John W. Keys, III Award and the Association of California Water Agencies' Lifetime Achievement Award. These awards serve as a reflection of the collective work we have all been part of over many years, and of the strong partnerships between the Coalition and organizations throughout California and the West. I am deeply grateful to the Alliance and ACWA, not only for the recognition but for the longstanding opportunities they have created for collaboration in support of our shared missions.