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**Executive Director**  
**Michael Wade**

**TO: San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Board of Directors**  
**FROM: Mike Wade, Executive Director**  
**DATE: January 30, 2026**  
**RE: Program and Activities Update**

As I reflect on the past 27 years of work with the California Farm Water Coalition, I am struck by the strength of the people who make this organization what it is. From the early days of explaining the value of irrigated agriculture to a skeptical public, to today's sophisticated campaigns that reach millions across California, CFWC's mission has always remained the same... to tell the story of how farm water sustains us all.

Over the years, and with the generous support of our members, we've built something remarkable. We've earned a reputation as a trusted, fact-based voice in the conversation about California's most precious resource. We've led public outreach that connects urban consumers to the farmers who feed them, and we've forged partnerships with agencies, academics, and advocates to create real understanding, not division. That legacy of success belongs to every member, director, and staff person who has shared this journey.

A debt of gratitude is owed to our dedicated Board of Directors, whose members include farmers, leaders from water agency boards across the state, and business professionals whose livelihoods are closely tied to agriculture. They give their time and perspective not for recognition, but because they believe in the Coalition's mission and the role it plays in explaining why water matters to farming and why farming matters to everyday life in California. Their steady guidance over the last 36 years has helped keep the Coalition grounded, credible, and focused on educating the public about the essential connection between water and food.

I also want to recognize our outstanding team. Brandon Souza, CFWC's Chief Operating Officer, has been an invaluable member of our team, bringing unparalleled technical skills and a true heart for agriculture. His ability to build relationships with many of our members helped keep the Coalition relevant and important to their operations. Deja Coke-Lo, our Projects and Operations Associate, keeps the organization running with efficiency, good humor, and genuine care for our mission. And Morgan Elia, our social media Director, has infused new energy and innovation into CFWC's outreach, engaging new audiences and strengthening our digital presence. Their combined talent ensures that CFWC's work will continue to thrive well into the future.

Over the years, the Coalition has had a consistent presence in the media to ensure that the role and needs of agricultural water users remained part of the public conversation. By contributing op-eds, letters to the editor,



interviews, and timely commentary, we were able to respond as issues arose and help shape how water challenges facing agriculture were understood by broader audiences. This work was strengthened through close collaboration with partners such as the Family Farm Alliance, California Farm Bureau Federation, Western Growers, Water Association of Kern County, Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley, the San Joaquin Valley Collaborative Action Program (CAP), and other statewide and regional agricultural water organizations. Together, these partnerships allowed us to align messages, extend our reach, and speak more effectively on behalf of farmers and water users across California.

As I prepare to pass the baton at the end of February, I do so with great confidence in CFWC's future. Our incoming Executive Director, Michelle Paul will bring fresh perspective, energy, and a deep passion for agriculture to the organization. She inherits a talented team, an engaged Board, and a community of supporters who understand the value of clear, honest communication about water and farming. I wish her every success as she leads this terrific organization into its next chapter.

It has been an honor to serve alongside each of you. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this extraordinary journey and for continuing the vital work of ensuring that California's farmers have the water they need to feed the world.

## **2025 Impact Report**

The California Farm Water Coalition's 2025 Impact Report is now available and provides a concise look at how the Coalition worked throughout the year to research, communicate, and engage on issues central to California agriculture and water reliability. The report highlights CFWC's role in tracking policy and regulatory developments, producing timely analysis, and translating complex water issues into clear, public-facing information.

It also summarizes outreach efforts with media, policymakers, and the public, as well as partnerships with member organizations that helped ensure agricultural perspectives were part of water discussions early in the decision-making process.

Individuals seeking additional detail are encouraged download the full report by scan the QR code included on the attached one-page overview. For those looking for a quick summary, CFWC has also produced a five-minute video that walks through the key themes and outcomes from the year.

Together, the report and video offer an informative snapshot of how CFWC advanced education and understanding on agricultural water and food production in 2025.

# 2025 IMPACT REPORT



FOOD GROWS WHERE WATER FLOWS



## BROADCASTING THE FARM WATER VOICE

CFWC's  
Editorial  
& Media  
Outreach in  
2025

The California Farm Water Coalition continues to engage proactively in the public discourse by authoring timely op-eds, letters-to-the-editor and commentary pieces that articulate the perspective of California's irrigated agriculture sector. As part of its broader media outreach work, these editorial interventions serve a dual mission: (1) to correct or clarify misperceptions about farm water use, regulation and supply, and (2) to elevate the voice of farmers and water suppliers in policy debates that affect California's food system, economy and communities.

**CLICK THE LINK BELOW OR SCAN THE QR CODE FOR  
THE FULL 2025 IMPACT REPORT AND SUMMARY VIDEO:**

<https://farmwater.org/2025-impact-report/>



## STANDING UP FOR CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE:

CFWC's  
Advocacy  
in 2025



CFWC's participation in industry advocacy letters reflects the organization's expanding influence and collaborative strength. By combining advocacy, science, and partnerships, the Coalition is ensuring that California agriculture's voice remains central in every water discussion — from the Delta to Washington, D.C.

## CFWC'S 2025 PARTNERSHIP IMPACT

Category	Impact / Value
Federal investment advocated	\$12.5 billion (One Big, Beautiful Bill Act)
State bond funding requested	\$694 million (Proposition 4 allocations)
Acre-feet of supply goal under E.O. 14181	9 million AF/year by 2040
Ecosystem restoration supported	45,000 acres
Water supply protected	200,000 AF/year (ESA regulatory rollback)
Jobs and economic activity preserved	67,000 jobs, \$14.5B potential benefit

## CFWC SOCIAL MEDIA

From  
California  
Farms to Your  
Social Feed



The California Farm Water Coalition runs an active and robust social media program—including our consumer-focused brand, Cultivate California—designed to help people understand where their food really comes from and why California-grown products matter. In 2025, our online presence continued to bring the story of California agriculture to life, connecting everyday consumers with the farmers, fields, and water supplies behind the foods they love.

177k  
Profile  
Visits

90.3k  
Followers  
Gained

142.2k  
Link  
Clicks

174.7k  
Interactions