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San Joaquin Valley Farmers Initially Slated to Get Fraction of Yearly Water Allocations

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Obama Administration’s Bureau of Reclamation today announced that farmers in California’s San Joaquin Valley would initially receive an estimated 30 percent of their allocated water supplies for 2012.

Despite experiencing near record precipitation last year, farmers and communities once again face the threat of another man-made drought due to federal regulations that will divert water supplies away from farmers in order to help a three-inch fish. In 2009, the man-made drought cost thousands of farm workers their jobs, inflicted up to 40 percent unemployment in certain communities, and fallowed hundreds of thousands of acres of fertile farm land. Although reservoirs helped store water last year, much of the water was lost to the ocean in light of inadequate storage and federal regulations. As a result, there may not be enough stored water this year and next if near record low precipitation continues over the next few months.

“The economy of California’s San Joaquin Valley depends on a stable and reliable water supply. It’s incomprehensible how, after thousands of workers lost their jobs and hundreds of thousands of acres of farm land dried up, that we are staring at another disastrous man-made drought,” said Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04). “Unlike the Obama Administration and Pelosi-led Congress that stood by and did nothing to help the plight of the San Joaquin Valley, Republicans have a comprehensive solution to put an end to this reversible situation so that farmers have access to the water supply they need.”

“This year’s water allocation dramatically highlights the need for urgent action to save our valley from yet another year of devastating drought at the hands of the federal government. Nothing short of a comprehensive plan as passed by the Natural Resources Committee last week to prevent further economic devastation is needed,” said Congressman Devin Nunes (CA-21).

“A 30 percent allocation is unacceptable. We had one of the wettest years in 2011, and instead of storing the water for future use, we let thousands of acre-feet of water flow from the Delta into the Ocean every day. Without adequate storage, we will continue to see this problem year after year,” said Congressman Jeff Denham (CA-19). “We can solve this problem. My amendment to H.R.1837, which passed out of the Natural Resources Committee, will allow for more storage construction and allow families and farmers to plan ahead in order to promote economic growth and create jobs.”

Last week, the Natural Resources Committee passed with bipartisan support [H.R. 1837](#), legislation to prevent future California man-made droughts. This comprehensive solution will bring water supply certainty to the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys, protect 30,000 jobs, generate millions in federal revenue, and decrease reliance on foreign food sources.

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