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## **Water and Power Subcommittee Ranking Republican McClintock Requests Field Hearing on California Drought**

*"The situation remains unacceptable and has many wondering if Congress has abdicated its responsibility while communities face economic extinction."*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today at an oversight hearing on Water Management and Climate Variability, House Water and Power Subcommittee Ranking Member Tom McClintock (CA-04) urged Democrats to help provide relief to San Joaquin Valley farmers and families who are suffering from a devastating man-made drought.

McClintock recently sent a [letter](#) to the Democrat majority requesting a field hearing on the water crisis in California's San Joaquin Valley. [Previous requests](#) for a field hearing on this issue have gone unanswered by the majority.

"I'm disappointed that we are not focusing on the plight of these families, or that 500,000 of the most fertile agricultural acres in the entire hemisphere have been fallowed," said McClintock during his opening statement. "I know there are some who believe that government can control the weather. There is some skepticism over that point. But no one can question that we can control the pumps in the Delta.

"There's no time to waste on reversing the plight of the San Joaquin Valley because what is happening there can happen anywhere else in the West and is entirely within our power to solve. To ignore their pleas continues to give the impression that this Subcommittee lets the San Joaquin Valley burn while the committee fiddles with lower priority matters like water data management."

### [Background](#)

- California's water storage and transportation system includes 1,200 miles of canals and nearly 50 reservoirs that provide water to 23 million people and irrigate four million acres of land throughout the state.
- In May 2007, a Federal District Court Judge ruled that increased amounts of water had to be re-allocated towards protecting the Delta smelt – a three-inch fish on the Endangered Species List. Because of this ruling, more than 150 billion gallons of water this year alone will be diverted away from farmers in the San Joaquin Valley and into the San Francisco Bay – eventually going out into the Pacific Ocean.

- For the first time ever, farmers on the west-side of the San Joaquin Valley were told they would receive 0% water allocation from the Bureau of Reclamation for their crops this season. That number was subsequently increased to a mere 10%.
- The lack of water has caused 500,000 acres of farm land to dry up – a land mass equivalent to the size of the State of Rhode Island. Also, according to a May 2009 report by U.C. Davis, the water restrictions have left nearly 40,000 people unemployed.
- Because California is the number one agricultural producer in the United States, no water means a smaller food supply, higher food prices nationwide, and increased reliance on foreign food sources.
- There is no proof that this water loss to the ocean will actually benefit the Delta smelt. And despite calls for help from Republicans, Speaker Pelosi and the Democrat majority refuse to temporarily suspend portions of the Endangered Species Act, as they consented for the snail darter in Tennessee and the silvery minnow in New Mexico, in order to return the flow of water to the farmers in the San Joaquin Valley. Furthermore, the Obama Administration continues to turn down California's requests for emergency assistance.

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