



P.O. Box 1705 • Clearlake Oaks, CA 95423  
(916)-206-7186 • jane@familyfarmalliance.org

Apr 19 2023  
2:10P

Dear Western Family Farm and Ranch Supporter:

Driven by concerns with rising food prices and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Family Farm Alliance Board of Directors in early 2022 directed our contractors to work with others in an effort to improve communications on what rising inflation and the Ukraine crisis means to American consumers.

Throughout 2022, the Alliance worked to educate the public, the media and policymakers on the linkage between the war in Ukraine, severe drought conditions in the Western U.S., significantly inflated food costs, global supply chain challenges, and a looming global famine. Notably, the Alliance and California Farm Water Coalition (CFWC) teamed up with the Klamath interests and went to work, solicited contributions, and designed a full-page advertisement that was published in the Wall Street Journal on April 2, 2022. The QR code at the bottom of the ad led readers to a web page with more information about this dire situation and what must be done to correct it. The campaign progressed over the summer with paid social media posts aimed at consumers aged 18 to 44 in major urban centers around the country.

To date, the campaign has generated over 7.3 million impressions with over 220,000 people clicking the link to visit the web site, where major points were made with supporting information.

Still, while inflation and the cost of living being the top concern of American voters, the mainstream media still largely fails to connect the dots between these concerns and our own government's policies that are directing water to the environment, away from some of the world's best producers of safe, affordable food – our members. Some recent developments should only reinforce the urgency for our national leaders to address our national food security and the looming global hunger crisis.

The 2022 Global Agricultural Productivity (GAP) Report was released last October by Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The GAP Report in 2010 first quantified the difference between the current rate of agricultural productivity growth and the pace required to meet future world food needs. That report predicted that total global agricultural output would have to be doubled by the year 2050 to meet the food needs of a growing global population. The overall message of the 2022 GAP report is that vulnerable agricultural systems rest on fragile foundations. Reversing the downward trajectory of global agricultural productivity growth, the report says, demands urgent action from policymakers, leaders, donors, scientists, farmers, and others in the agri-food system.

The U.S. has long been an agricultural juggernaut, and our agricultural export capability has helped feed the world. But in 2019, for the first time in more than 50 years, the U.S. ran an agricultural trade deficit. The USDA forecasts we will again run a deficit in 2023, for the third time since 2019.

Meanwhile, in California's Central Valley, 695,000 acres of farmland went fallow this past year. Undoubtedly, the Western drought has reduced the amount of water for many users, including irrigated agriculture. However, in places like California, Central Oregon, and here in the Klamath Basin, much of the water that once flowed to farms and ranches is currently being re-directed by the federal government for environmental purposes.

In other words, federal water policy is shutting down water availability for hundreds of thousands of acres of productive farmland. At a time when the future of Ukraine and other country's ability to help feed the outside world is at risk, our ability to increase productivity is being further curtailed – due in part, to our own government.

America gave up domestic manufacturing over the last several decades leading to global trade deals that resulted in diminished national security. Are we now headed for a crisis which will lead to the loss of domestic food production, inevitably leading to a complete collapse of our national security? The expulsion of Sri Lanka's president from his country in July and the downfall of Britain's prime minister late last year should serve as a warning to all of the political peril that awaits those who fail to address the erosion of living standards, no matter the cause.

At the Alliance, we will continue our efforts to ensure that irrigated agriculture continues to play a vital role in feeding our Nation, while keeping our rural communities and the environment healthy.

The unprecedented drought that we have experienced for over two years has helped spark public and political awareness of the importance of Western water infrastructure and contributed to the inclusion of \$8.3 billion funding for Bureau of Reclamation infrastructure and another \$4 billion to address the Western drought? This level of federal investment – which the Alliance helped drive - is something we'll likely never see again.

The Alliance is seen by many water resource stakeholders and policy makers across the West and in Washington, D.C. as a key player in the context of Western water resource management and how this important function is impacted by implementation of federal laws and regulations. We have a proven track record of successful engagement with federal policymakers that includes 95 invitations to appear before Congress since 2005. The Alliance has led the way in monitoring and reporting on the recent fast-paced and focused efforts federal agencies are currently applying to trim the fat off burdensome regulations and rules. We have developed relevant, credible public statements to address them.

Western irrigated agriculture is a strategic national resource, and the role of the federal government in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century should be to protect and enhance that resource. There may never be a better time than now for thoughtful and courageous leaders to stand up and shout down the critics and back seat drivers who don't have a single minute's worth of experience in the Western water arena.

Your contributions matter. Whether you support the Alliance's advocacy, outreach or education efforts, you can rest assured that your investment will promote the protection of Western irrigated agriculture and the strong rural communities that it supports. I encourage you to make your tax-deductible gift to the Alliance today.

Grassroots membership is vital to our organization. If you would like further information, please feel free to contact me at (541)-892-6244.

Sincerely,



Dan Keppen  
Executive Director

2023 Budget  
\$1650<sup>00</sup>/yr.

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MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** SAN LUIS & DELTA-MENDOTA WATER AUTHORITY DIRECTORS  
**FROM:** DAN KEPPEL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**SUBJECT:** UPDATE REPORT  
**DATE:** MAY 1, 2023

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This memo is intended to keep you apprised as to what is happening regarding policy issues the Family Farm Alliance (Alliance) is engaged in. In the past month, much of our efforts have focused on initiating action items following our 2023 annual conference, preparing for and testifying at a House subcommittee hearing, advancing farm bill ideas with Western Senator and committee staff, and engaging in litigation and administrative matters. These issues and other matters important to our members are further discussed in this memo.

**BIDEN ADMINISTRATION**

**1. Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA): Regulatory Review**

The White House Office of Management and Budget OIRA announced two important steps to improve the federal regulatory review process. First, President Biden signed an executive order that will increase the threshold for benefit cost analysis to \$200 million from \$100 million in annual effects and directs that it be adjusted for GDP growth every three years. This change is intended to help return the number of regulations subject to more rigorous review to levels consistent with earlier administrations. OIRA has also already been engaging with members of the public to seek feedback on ways to improve public participation in the regulatory process, and the executive order will build on this progress. Second, OIRA is also issuing proposed revisions to its government-wide guidance on regulatory analysis, Circular A-4. The revision updates the discount rate that translates future costs and benefits into present-day values, provides greater support for analyzing distributional effects, and provides more thorough guidance for accounting for risk and uncertainty. OMB is also proposing regulations to A-94, last revised in 1992, which provides guidance on how federal grant money is spent each year.

these processes. The Alliance’s request to speak at the March 31 listening session hosted by CEQ on the Lower Snake River dams to hear public perspectives on the projects was not granted. Still, some of our members participated in the listening sessions, which were advertised as opportunities for “non-parties” to the litigation to provide input. Instead, the vast majority of the comments generated at the sessions came from the plaintiff groups involved in the litigation, and their affiliates (“8-1 in favor of dam removal”, according to one person who participated). Our members “listened” in dismayed silence as pro-dam breaching advocates dominated the discussion with their talking points. We were asked by some of our Idaho members to send a letter to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Vilsack to engage in this process to provide a new perspective. Last month, we transmitted a final letter that highlights our concerns and explains that dam removal would certainly impact irrigated agriculture's ability to export food. The letter highlights food security, which is one of our touchstones.

In the meantime, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers and her colleague Rep. Dan Newhouse, both of Washington, introduced legislation last month to protect the four lower Snake River dams. The move came just a few days after President Biden said at the White House Conservation Summit (*reported to you in last month’s update*) that he is committed to working with Rep. Mike Simpson (R-IDAHO) and Washington senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, both Democrats, to save Columbia and Snake river salmon (although the President mistakenly referred to the wrong river in his commitment to bring healthy and abundant salmon runs back to the Colorado River system). President Biden did not say he supports dam breaching and of the politicians he mentioned, only Rep. Simpson has publicly backed the idea.

## **5. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation**

### **a. Asset Management Report**

In 2019, Congress passed the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, Public Law No. 116-9, Title VIII, Subtitle G – Bureau of Reclamation Transparency Act (Transparency Act). The Transparency Act requires the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to provide Congress with a detailed assessment of major rehabilitation and replacement (MR&R) needs, categorization of these repair needs, and regular reporting of information related to Reclamation’s investments in infrastructure. The Asset Management Report (Report) to Congress is a biennial submission. In compliance with the Transparency Act, Reclamation transmitted the first Report to Congress in 2021 and has now submitted the second Report to Congress, both of which can be accessed at <https://www.usbr.gov/infrastructure>.

### **b. Climate Change Adaptation Strategy**

Reclamation two weeks ago released its Climate Change Adaptation Strategy that outlines how Reclamation will combat climate change. The strategy also affirms Reclamation will use “leading science and engineering” to adapt to human-caused climate change. There are four goals:

funding opportunities and awards throughout the year. Many Alliance members' projects made the list.

iii. \$20 Million from IJA for Drought Resilience Projects

Interior two weeks ago announced \$20 million for four small surface and groundwater storage projects in California and Utah. These projects, funded through the IJA, are essential tools to help conserve water and increase the efficiency of water use in the Colorado River Basin. The announcement came as Department and White House officials were traveling across the Colorado River Basin as part of the "Investing in America" tour to highlight investments from the IJA and the IRA (*see Item 15 for additional Colorado River funding announcements*). Projects announced include three projects in California and one in Utah, including \$9.5 Million for Imperial Irrigation District's Upstream Reservoir Storage Project, \$4.7 Million for Groundwater Banking Joint Powers Authority's Phase 1 of the Kern Fan Groundwater Storage Project, and \$1 Million for Del Puerto Water District's Orestimba Creek Recharge and Recovery Project. The Small Storage Program was authorized by the IJA. Projects must have a water storage capacity of between 200 acre-feet and 30,000 acre-feet. On September 14, 2022, Reclamation published the first funding opportunity for the Small Storage Program, which closed on December 9, 2022. Eligible projects completed a feasibility study, which was submitted to Reclamation for review.

c. WaterSMART Aquatic Ecosystem Projects

The Department of the Interior has announced a solicitation for the WaterSMART Aquatic Ecosystem Projects. The purpose of this program is to invite eligible applicants to leverage their money and resources by cost sharing with Reclamation on Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Projects, including study, design and construction of aquatic ecosystem restoration projects that are collaboratively developed, have widespread regional benefits, and are for the purpose of improving the health of fisheries, wildlife, and aquatic habitat through restoration and improved fish passage. Funding is available through two separate categories:

- Task A: Study and Design: Projects must include study and design activities to develop an aquatic ecosystem restoration project, resulting in the development of a study and design package that can be used to apply for funding under Task B. To be eligible to apply for Task B, applicants must have conducted study and design activities resulting in a design package at a 60 percent design level. A 60 percent design package should include technical study and design documentation supporting the preferred alternative in sufficient detail to be able to obtain the necessary permits and estimate funding required for project implementation.
- Task B: Construction: To be eligible under this category, projects must include the construction of aquatic ecosystem restoration projects that are collaboratively developed, have widespread regional benefits, and are for the purpose of improving the health of fisheries, wildlife, and aquatic habitat through restoration and improved fish passage.

NOAA's work on marine mammal protections and ESA-listed anadromous and catadromous fish species ought to be handled by the Interior Department instead. President Richard Nixon created NOAA under the Commerce Department by executive order in 1970. Since then, the agency has operated under patchwork more than 200 legislative authorities. During a House Science, Space and Technology Committee hearing last month, three former NOAA Administrators who all served during Republican Administrations, agreed that authorizing NOAA as a new executive branch agency and moving the agency out of the Department of Commerce would streamline and improve operations, bolster scientific integrity and facilitate crucial partnerships with private entities. The Alliance has long supported earlier versions of the FISH Act, and I previously testified on a related bill in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress.

#### **8. House GOP Moving Energy Package to Include Permitting Reform Bill**

House Republicans passed a sprawling energy bill in late March, intended to restore energy independence. *The Lower Energy Costs Act* (H.R. 1) focuses on increasing domestic energy production, reversing policies advanced by the Biden administration, and boosting production and processing of critical minerals. It also includes important permitting process reforms for all industries. The bill passed by a 225-204 vote, with four Democrats joining Republicans to pass the bill and one Republican legislator voting against. H.R. 1 includes the "*BUILDER Act of 2023*," legislation from Rep. Garret Graves (R-LA), would shorten the time allowed to complete environmental reviews and to file lawsuits challenging those reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The BUILDER Act would limit to one and two years the length of NEPA environmental assessments and impact statements, respectively. It would also place a deadline of 120-days for parties to file lawsuits related to projects.

We've been working with GOP staff at the House Natural Resources Committee for the past year on ways to modernize implementation of NEPA. We are always looking for ways to clarify ambiguous provisions, align NEPA with relevant case law, reflect modern technologies, optimize interagency coordination, and facilitate a more efficient, effective, and timely environmental review process. The BUILDER Act could garner bipartisan support as renewable energy as well as traditional energy projects are slowed due to NEPA process delays. Water infrastructure projects are also sometimes delayed by the NEPA process. The GOP package, including the NEPA reforms, was approved by the Committee and will be taken up by the full House later this spring, even though House Democrats on the Natural Resources Committee remain staunchly opposed to the package. The package may also pick up other bills from various House committees in the process. But most Democrats and the White House dismissed the Republican bill as reviving fossil fuel-centric policies or gutting environmental permitting processes. The bill likely won't advance in the Democratically controlled Senate.

#### **9. 2023 Farm Bill**

The Senate Agriculture Committee is ramping-up farm bill activity as policy ideas and support for those ideas assessed. We've been working with our allies in agriculture and the conservation

## **10. OpenET Act**

A bipartisan coalition of Western lawmakers in late March reintroduced their "*Open Access Evapotranspiration Data (OpenET) Act*," filed as H.R. 4832 and S. 2568 in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress to create a new program in the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) that could be used to track water lost to evaporation and transpiration from soil, crops and vegetation in a river basin. Rep. Susie Lee (D-NEVADA), whose district includes parts of Las Vegas, sponsored the House bill along with Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CALIFORNIA) and Reps. Burgess Owens (R-UTAH) and Chris Stewart (R-UTAH). Bill sponsors say that data could prove crucial to many drought-stricken river basins in the West, including the Colorado River Basin. Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NEVADA) and John Hickenlooper (D-COLORADO) introduced the bill in the Senate.

Evapotranspiration can be tracked with satellites and weather stations, although critics of the legislation argue that making such data widely available to the public using federal resources, which is made possible by the OpenET legislation, must be subject to existing data privacy and data quality laws as well as be peer-reviewed for accuracy. We share the concerns expressed by other agricultural producers in the West regarding S. 2568, which would inject major federal funding into the OpenET program. We stand ready to work with the sponsors of these and similar proposals to ensure they do not have unintended consequences for Western agriculture and water management. Hopefully, the OpenET discussions will lead to opportunities where we can generate political interest that drives science to get things right on things like the relatively unknown shallow groundwater / surface water relationship in many areas of the Upper Colorado River Basin. Right now, we're checking the pulse of other state, regional and national ag groups, who appear to me to be getting more nervous about this legislation as time goes on.

## **ALLIANCE INITIATIVES**

### **11. Clean Water Act "Waters of the U.S." (WOTUS)**

The House of Representatives last month failed to override President Joe Biden's veto of a resolution under the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to undo a rule defining the Clean Water Act's reach by defining "waters of the U.S.," or WOTUS. House Republicans ultimately failed on a 227-196 vote to meet the two-thirds majority required to override a Presidential veto. Republicans did, however, get 10 Democrats to defy the President. They include House Agriculture ranking member David Scott and Rep. Sanford Bishop, ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture. Nine House Democrats and four Senate Democrats joined Republicans in voting for the CRA resolutions against the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers WOTUS rule, sending the measure to President Biden's desk last month.

Now with that effort vetoed, WOTUS rule opponents are now looking to the courts for relief. Judges have already blocked the rule in 26 states. U.S. District Judge Daniel Hovland issued a preliminary injunction in a case two dozen Republican state attorneys general brought against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers. "The Court finds that

are limited to 2.083 million-acre-feet because this is the maximum volume analyzed in the 2007 Interim Guidelines final environmental impact statement.

- **Action Alternative 2:** Action Alternative 2 is similar to Action Alternative 1 in how it models potential operational changes to both Glen Canyon Dam and Hoover Dam. Action Alternative 2 includes modeling for reduced releases from Glen Canyon Dam, as well as an analysis of the effects of additional Lower Colorado River Basin reductions that are distributed in the **same percentage** across all Lower Basin water users under shortage conditions. The total shortage contributions in 2024, including those under existing agreements, are limited to 2.083 million-acre-feet because this is the maximum volume analyzed in the 2007 Interim Guidelines FEIS.

The full document can [be found here](#) and a Reclamation press release can be [found here](#).

The SEIS is an attempt by the Administration to save hydropower production on the river, which serves some 40 million individuals in seven states and millions of acres of irrigated crop lands, by raising water levels in Lake Powell and Lake Mead and protecting downstream water deliveries from “dead pool” levels, which have been dropping precipitously during recent drought years. The Department of the Interior began working on this plan in October 2022 after the seven Colorado River Basin states — Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming — missed a deadline to propose their own cuts. Since June, the Biden Administration has pressed the seven basin states to outline their own solution. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton announced her agency would need between 2 million and 4 million acre-feet in cuts to keep hydropower facilities operating.

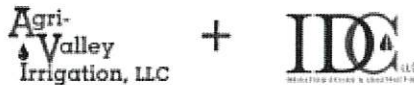
Ahead of Reclamation’s release of the draft SEIS, six states agreed on a plan that would put the basin's most senior water user, California, on par with the most junior users, Arizona and Nevada in spreading out the necessary cuts in water deliveries from the river. In contrast, California offered its own plan adhering to water right seniorities on the river. In announcing the draft SEIS, senior Interior officials noted that the alternatives should give the seven Basin States bookends to work within to continue to collaborate and develop a consensus alternative for future reductions in water deliveries from the river. The Family Farm Alliance in March 2022 adopted a policy brief that outlines the pro-agriculture principles that we will continue to advance as new operation guidelines are developed. I’ll be participating in an agricultural panel discussion at the upcoming CLE Colorado River Policy conference in Scottsdale (ARIZONA) next month.

*This is a quick summary of just a few of the issues the Alliance has been engaged in. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [dan@familyfarmalliance.org](mailto:dan@familyfarmalliance.org) if you would like further information about what the Alliance is doing to protect water for Western irrigated agriculture.*



# Agri-Valley Irrigation and Irrigation Design & Construction Are Now AvidWater

- IDC Staff
- April 29, 2023



## *The Name Changed But The Commitment To Customers Remains The Same*

**FRESNO, CALIFORNIA, MAY 01, 2023** – In 2017, two of the largest irrigation dealers, Agri-Valley Irrigation, Inc. (AVI) and Irrigation Design & Construction, Inc. (IDC) were part of an industry-changing vertical integration merger with Jain Irrigation, Inc. The merged companies supply unparalleled leadership in design, construction, service, equipment, and innovative Ag irrigation technology with the widest reach in California.

As a result of the global merger between Rivulis and Jain Irrigation's international irrigation business, it became possible for two of the three largest irrigation manufacturing entities to globally combine and made it so AVI and IDC could now fully and formally merge their entities.

As AVI and IDC worked together over the past six years, it became clear that the teams no longer worked as separate entities but as one successful dealer providing innovative solutions and exceptional customer service. One of the best values of the merger was the synergies of the teams. To honor the teamwork and the rich history, AVI and IDC changed their name to AvidWater.

A joint team of representatives from AVI and IDC selected the name. It represents both companies and celebrates their rich history while acknowledging the opportunity for more extraordinary solutions and services for customers due to the merger. AvidWater is excited to show customers the value of one.

According to Aric Olson, CEO of AvidWater, "We have some excellent opportunities for our customers and employees. Our service offerings are expanding. While they still include automation, water treatment, pump, electrical, concrete, and rental, we'll immediately be adding water management services (daily irrigation scheduling using the start of the art technologies), irrigation consulting, and industry firsts – irrigation as a service (we'll run the irrigation system for the grower), and an irrigation climate program. The climate program helps customers create climate credits through smart water management practices they can sell on the open market generating another source of income for growers."

In conclusion, the global merger between Rivulis and Jain Irrigation Inc. allowed AVI and IDC to formally merge and create AvidWater, a company that offers unparalleled leadership in design, construction, service, equipment, and innovative Ag irrigation technology. The synergy between the teams has resulted in expanding service offerings, including irrigation consulting, daily irrigation scheduling, irrigation as a service, and an irrigation climate program. AvidWater is excited to continue providing innovative solutions and services to customers and looks forward to showcasing the value of its one-team approach

# Effort to expand Los Vaqueros Reservoir

## The goal is a reliable water source for East County

- Chris Campos, Staff Writer

BRENTWOOD – Los Vaqueros Reservoir, the biggest watering hole in Contra Costa County, isn't full despite the onslaught of rain storms that drenched the Bay Area this winter.

Despite a record snowpack in the Sierra, our local reservoir gets fed only a small trickle from Marsh Creek. Besides rainfall, the Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) relies on four Delta intake pumps near Tracy to fill the 160,000 acre-feet capacity of the reservoir, which covers 1,900 acres of land in the southeast corner of the county. The reservoir's current level is at about 105,300 acre-feet. One acre foot is about 326,000 gallons.

"They're pumping 24/7 and working hard" to fill the reservoir, according to Jennifer Allen, the CCWD director of public affairs.

Allen added Tuesday, "We are currently filling Los Vaqueros now through at least the end of April. Decisions on continued filling will depend on conditions in the Delta, Delta water quality and the cost of energy. The intakes and pipelines were sized to minimize impacts to the environment and fish. The District will find appropriate windows of opportunity to put more water into the reservoir."

The goals of the expansion, according to the Joint Powers Authority, include:

A reliable water source for south of Delta wildlife refuges;

Reliable water supply for local water agencies;

High potential for regional water system integration;

Protection of delivered water quality;

Enhanced recreation facilities.

The 18,500 acres of Los Vaqueros' watershed provides a number of recreational opportunities including fishing, boating (from the marina located at the Livermore entrance from Vasco Road), birding, education (through the Interpretive Center) and 50 miles of trails for hiking. Repairs to several trails are underway following winter rainfall damage and mudslides. The watershed is now holding April to August hours of operation from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Fishing opportunities at the reservoir include catfish, trout, striped bass, bluegill/sunfish, crappie and largemouth bass.

Private boats and dog and cat pets are not allowed at the reservoir.

But bigger plans are afoot for the reservoir's future.

The eight partners in the Los Vaqueros Reservoir Joint Powers Authority (JPA) have given approval to expand the reservoir's capacity to 275,000 acre-feet of water. The expansion will require raising the reservoir's dam by 56 feet.

The JPA partners, besides CCWD, include: the Alameda County Water District, City of Brentwood (through CCWD), the East Bay Municipal Utility District, the Grassland Water District, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency, the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority (which includes the Byron Bethany Irrigation District, the City of Tracy, the Del Puerto Water District, the Panoche Water District and Westlands Water District), the Santa Clara Valley Water District and the Zone 7 Water Agency.

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The expansion project is expected to cost \$980 million to complete, officials said. Federal funding provides \$203 million, state funding supplies \$477 million with local sources funding the final \$300 million.

The next step in the process will be final funding approval from the California Water Commission, which is expected this summer. Allen said recently that the Joint Powers Authority expects to start construction by the end of this year with completion planned in 2030

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# Valadao's sweeping water legislation advances out of committee

Last week's passage through the Natural Resources Committee brings the bill one step closer to becoming law.



BY DANIEL GLIGICH

MAY 1, 2023

2 MINUTE READ



A sweeping overhaul of California's water policy, specifically the rules that govern water throughout the Central Valley, took one step closer to becoming reality.

Last week, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed the Working to Advance Tangible and Effective Reforms (WATER) for California Act, which was introduced by Rep. David Valadao (R-Hanford).

**The backstory:** Valadao initially introduced the WATER for California Act last December and brought it back for the new Republican-controlled House in January.

- Part of the legislation centers on the 2019 biological opinions that govern the state's water usage. President Joe Biden's administration has been working to throw out the Trump-era rules and revert back to the previous biological opinions administered in 2008 and 2009.

**The big picture:** The WATER for California Act would streamline operations, expand water storage infrastructure and increase accountability of water use.

- The legislation would require the Central Valley Project (CVP) and the State Water Project (SVP) to operate under the 2019 biological opinions, blocking the Biden administration's attempts at repealing those rules.
- Valadao's bill would direct the Secretary of the Interior to make every reasonable effort to allocate water to the state's water contractors, pushing back against the zero percent allocations in 2021 and 2022.
- The Shasta Enlargement Project would become eligible for funding by Biden's infrastructure bill, which allocated \$1.15 billion for storage projects but excluded Shasta.
- The final part of Valadao's bill would reauthorize the water storage project program and coordinated operations of the CVP and SVP, which were established by the WIIN Act and expired in 2021.

**What they're saying:** Valadao said in a statement that the state has wasted a "seemingly immeasurable amount of water" over the years because of a lack of storage.

- "For years, I have stressed the dire need to increase water storage, but extreme environmentalists and Sacramento bureaucrats have grossly mismanaged our water and prevented these projects from getting off the ground," Valadao said.
- Valadao added, "If we don't take action to fix the complex and contradictory laws and regulations that control how much we're able



to pump, and what storage projects we're able to build or use, our ability to provide food for the nation will be in trouble. The WATER for California Act brings desperately needed commonsense to the way we manage water, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance this critical legislation."

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