



# Board Agenda Item 4.1

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DATE: April 13, 2021

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Brian Pacheco, Vice-Chairman  
Supervisor District One

Buddy Mendes, Supervisor  
Supervisor District Four

SUBJECT: Delivery of Surface Water Supplies to Westside Fresno County

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

**Authorize the Board of Supervisors to send a letter to Federal and State representatives requesting acceleration of westside surface water deliveries in Fresno County.**

Approval of the recommended action would authorize a letter (Exhibit A) to be sent to Mr. Ernest Conant, Regional Director of the United States Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) requesting advance delivery of surface water to westside farmers served by the Central valley Project. This item pertains to locations in District 1 and District 4.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

You Board may choose to not send the subject letter.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended action.

DISCUSSION:

The 2021 water year is on course to be the third driest water year on record and the Bureau is limited in its ability to make water available to westside farmers because of the dry hydrology conditions and its obligations under federal and state regulations, which limit operations of the Central Valley Project (CVP). Farmers in western Fresno County served by the CVP have received only a five percent allocation for this irrigation season and have been told they will not have access to surface waters until further notice. Moreover, the ability of these farmers to obtain water through transfers for immediate use is very limited because south-of-Delta sources of transfer water are generally unavailable in a critical water year and transfer water from areas upstream of the Delta cannot be conveyed to them until after June. As a consequence, numerous farmers have no access to surface water to irrigate their crops, including permanent crops like almonds, pistachios, and grapes, and many of these farmers have reported that they will fallow all their open ground and will abandon thousands of acres of permanent crops.

The attached letter requests that the Bureau take immediate action to mitigate this looming disaster by either providing farmers access to CVP water now, in exchange for water that will be transferred on their behalf

after July 1st or any other actions to make water available immediately.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Exhibit A - Board of Supervisors letter

CAO ANALYST:

Ronald Alexander