

Draft Fact Sheet

California's State Water Resources Control Board is Attempting to Illegally Take Water Rights from Farmers.

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) is telling CVP and SWP water users that because of the drought they are prohibited from pumping water they otherwise have a legal right to use.

The State Board is requiring those same water users to set aside the water they would use to grow food for other undefined "health and safety" purposes in 2015.

California's Constitution requires regulatory agencies to issue a notice and hold a public hearing before they restrict water use that is already authorized for an allowable use, which includes irrigating farmland.

The State Board is targeting the hardest hit area of the state to shoulder the entire burden of assuring its "health and safety" water supply next year for areas that have yet to be defined.

Historic unemployment in rural parts of the Valley is higher than 40 percent when water supplies are low. The State Board's illegal action hurts the disadvantaged communities that are already suffering.

Farms are the only businesses targeted under this water rights attack. Manufacturers, offices, retail stores and others all rely on the California's water resources, yet all other areas of the state are excluded from demands to fulfill the undefined "health and safety" purposes.

The taking of water rights also affects wildlife refuges that depend on CVP water for their viability. The action would result in disastrous, irreparable injury to public trust wildlife resources.

The Bureau of Reclamation has been operating this part of its facilities and balancing competing interests for over 60 years. The State Board is unwarranted in second-guessing seasoned water managers from their desks in Sacramento.

Water users and the Bureau of Reclamation have a viable proposal that would allow legal delivery of water to farms while protecting water quality as well as fish and wildlife resources in the Delta.

Economic and Social Impacts State Water Resources Control Board's Illegal Action

How is it impacting agriculture?

More than 500,000 acres of productive farmland are expected to be fallowed this year. That's 780 square miles or about the combined size of Los Angeles and San Diego. The value of lost crop production in 2009 was \$368 million. This year that is estimated to top **\$1.7 billion**.

How will it impact the economy?

Many jobs depend on agricultural production including processing, transportation, wholesale, retail and shipping through ports, such as Los Angeles, Long Beach and Oakland. The value of lost economic activity tied to reduced crop production is estimated to reach **\$5 billion**.

Job Losses

2009 – 7,434
2014 – 15,000 (est.)

Additional Information

Biological Opinion Impacts – 2012-2013
815,000 acre-feet of water went to the ocean in December and January with no measurable environmental benefit.

That was enough water to produce crops on 200,000 acres, which could have grown:

10 million tons of tomatoes;
or 200 million boxes of lettuce (3.2 billion heads);
or 20 million tons of grapes;
or 210 million cartons of melons

Crop Losses

2009 - \$368 million
2014 - \$1.7 billion (est.)