

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 20, 2024

The Honorable Camille Calimlim Touton
Commissioner
Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240-0001

Dear Commissioner Touton,

As the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (“Reclamation”) considers modifications to Central Valley Project (CVP) water allocations for south-of-Delta agricultural water service and repayment contractors, we write to urge you to provide a substantial increase in water allocations. As temperatures rise, the current water allocations have the potential to reduce crop productivity, as well as reduce the flexible use of all available water types to Central Valley residents and communities. To maximize agricultural productivity and the flexible use of water contractor portfolios, we request that Reclamation provide an update in June that increases allocations.

This past winter California experienced atmospheric river storms with heavy snow and intense rainfall. Due to these storms, early 2024 hydrology conditions resulted in above average snowpack in the Sierras and flood operations across multiple CVP facilities. This was evident at reservoirs of various sizes, such as Lake Shasta and Millerton Lake, that have reflected similar amounts of water in 2024, as they did in 2023, an anomaly in California water. The high runoff and strong snowpack that were generated from these winter storms provided an opportunity to have consecutive years of beneficial surface water supplies. However, limitations imposed by export constraints resulted in lower than anticipated early allocations, causing many agricultural water users to shift to groundwater to support a portion of their operations. However, given the current availability of water in the system, we urge Reclamation to take into account this increase in supply when considering updates to its allocations.

Reclamation’s 2024 CVP allocation increases, while welcome, have unfortunately lacked the pace necessary to provide certainty to Central Valley farmers, ranchers, and dairymen and women to feed the nation and the world. This certainty is necessary to most effectively prepare, plan, and use allotted water supply, and to ultimately reduce demand on groundwater aquifers. We understand that water allocation decisions are complex and involve weighing numerous outcomes based upon anticipated and unanticipated operational constraints and the ability to ensure delivery of already-granted allocations. However, allocation decisions must be made with sufficient timing to allow agricultural water users the ability to plan operations, acquire sufficient supplemental water, and create continuity in planning for planting and harvesting schedules. This planning greatly influences groundwater management and ensures implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans pursuant to California’s *Sustainable Groundwater Management Act*.

As you know, water is the lifeblood of the Valley and predictable water allocations have allowed the Central Valley to become the breadbasket of the world. To ensure that Valley agriculture and

its groundwater dependent communities can flourish we must continue to use adaptive management practices to support allocations that are in line with water supply conditions. Through this, water users will be able to build upon the great progress advanced by the South of Delta Drought Resiliency Framework, of which Reclamation, under your leadership, was an integral partner. Thus, we urge Reclamation to increase allocations to south-of-Delta water contractors in June, when operations can still be adjusted to maximize the beneficial use of diverse water supply portfolios.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

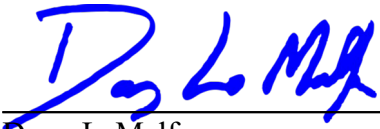
Sincerely,



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



David G. Valadao
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



Josh Harder
Member of Congress



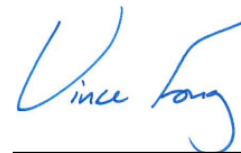
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



John S. Duarte
Member of Congress



Vince Fong
Member of Congress