

Costa: Commonsense bill would mean more water, more jobs for the Valley

FRESNO, CA – Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) unveiled new legislation today that would bring significantly more water to Valley farmers and growers who receive water from the Central Valley Project (CVP) and the California State Water Project (SWP).

The legislation would for four years provide congressional direction to implementation of the Endangered Species Act, restore operational flexibility for California water projects, and provide reasonable protection to threatened species. Specifically, the legislation would modify reasonable and prudent alternatives in the biological opinions for the operations of the CVP and the SWP issued by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

“Our streets are flooding, our food banks are going empty, and unemployment in the Valley is nearing 20%. California’s water system is broken. We can fix it,” said Costa. **“This commonsense legislation would bring needed flexibility to California’s water policy. If this bill becomes law, our Valley would receive an additional 200,000 acre feet of water that could be put to good use this summer. This bill means more water, more jobs, and a stronger economy for the San Joaquin Valley. It is time to put aside our political labels and get to work for the people of the valley by sending this bill to the President's desk.”**

The legislation is supported by numerous Valley water districts, including Westlands Water District and Friant Water Authority. Tom Birmingham, General Manager of Westlands Water District, added, **“We are on track to have one of the wettest years on record in California, and farmers on the Westside of the San Joaquin Valley have been told that they can expect to receive slightly more than half of their normal water supplies. This unimaginable situation is the result of rigid restrictions placed on operations of the Central Valley Project under the Endangered Species Act, restrictions that the Court and the National Academies of Science have found are not supported by science. The legislation that Mr. Costa will introduce will change this situation.”**

Joe Del Bosque, owner of Empresas Del Bosque, Inc. of Los Banos, CA, and member of the California Water Commission, highlighted the positive effect this legislation would have on his

farm: **“With this additional water, we could grow another 120 acres of cantaloupes, 85 acres of asparagus, and irrigate 500 more acres of wheat. The increase would bring 25 jobs to my farm alone and put food on the table for more Valley families.”**