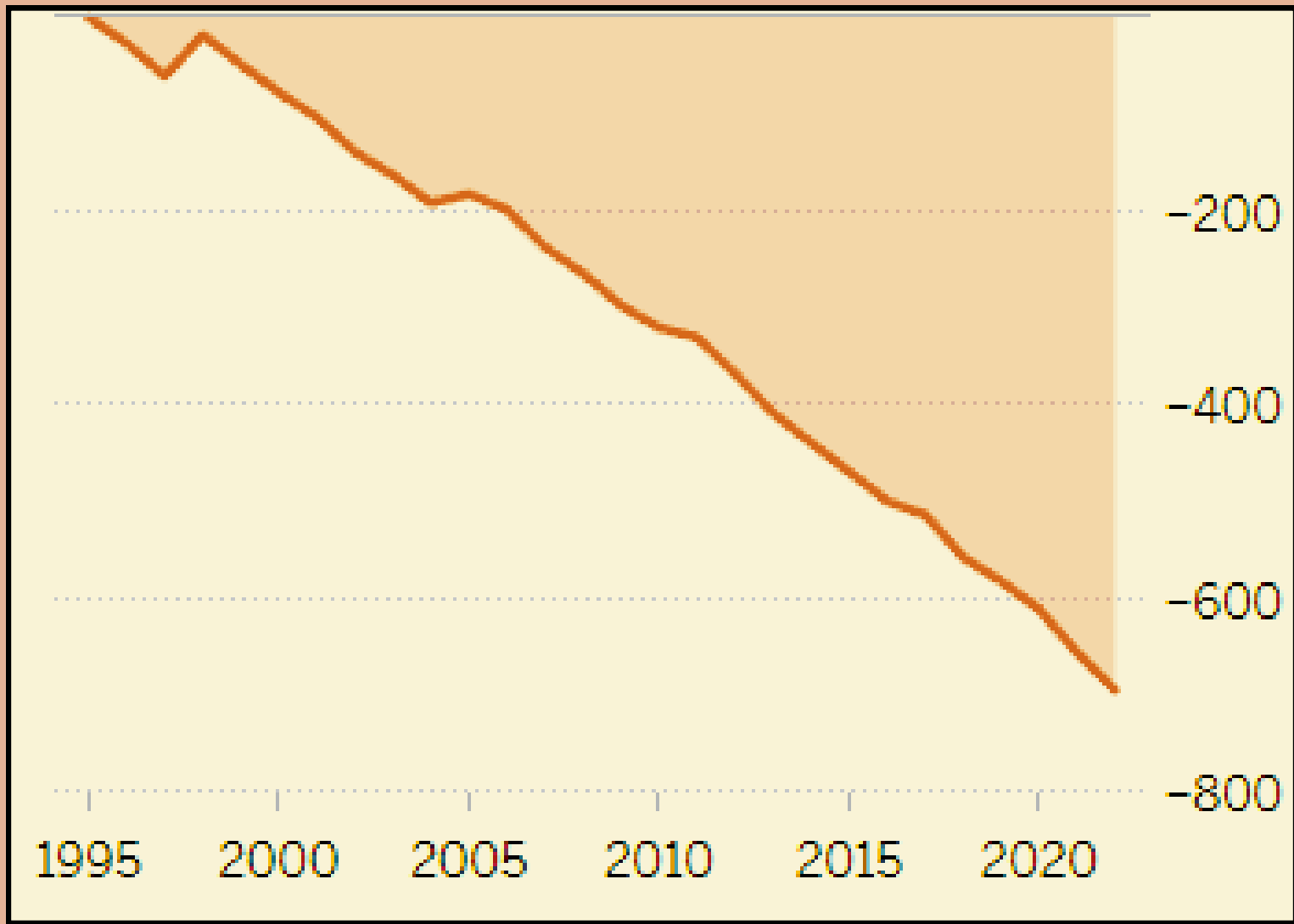


Carrots Over Communities: The Cuyama Groundwater Crisis

The Cuyama Valley Basin, located in northern Santa Barbara County, is one of 21 basins in California listed as

"CRITICALLY OVERDRAFTED"

Since 1995, almost **700,000** acre-feet of water has been pumped from Cuyama Valley's aquifer.



Cumulative Change in Total Groundwater Storage (a.f)

Who lives here?

1,128 residents

60% Latino population



56%

of Latino households have a member working in agriculture

2x

as likely for these households to make less than \$50,000 annually

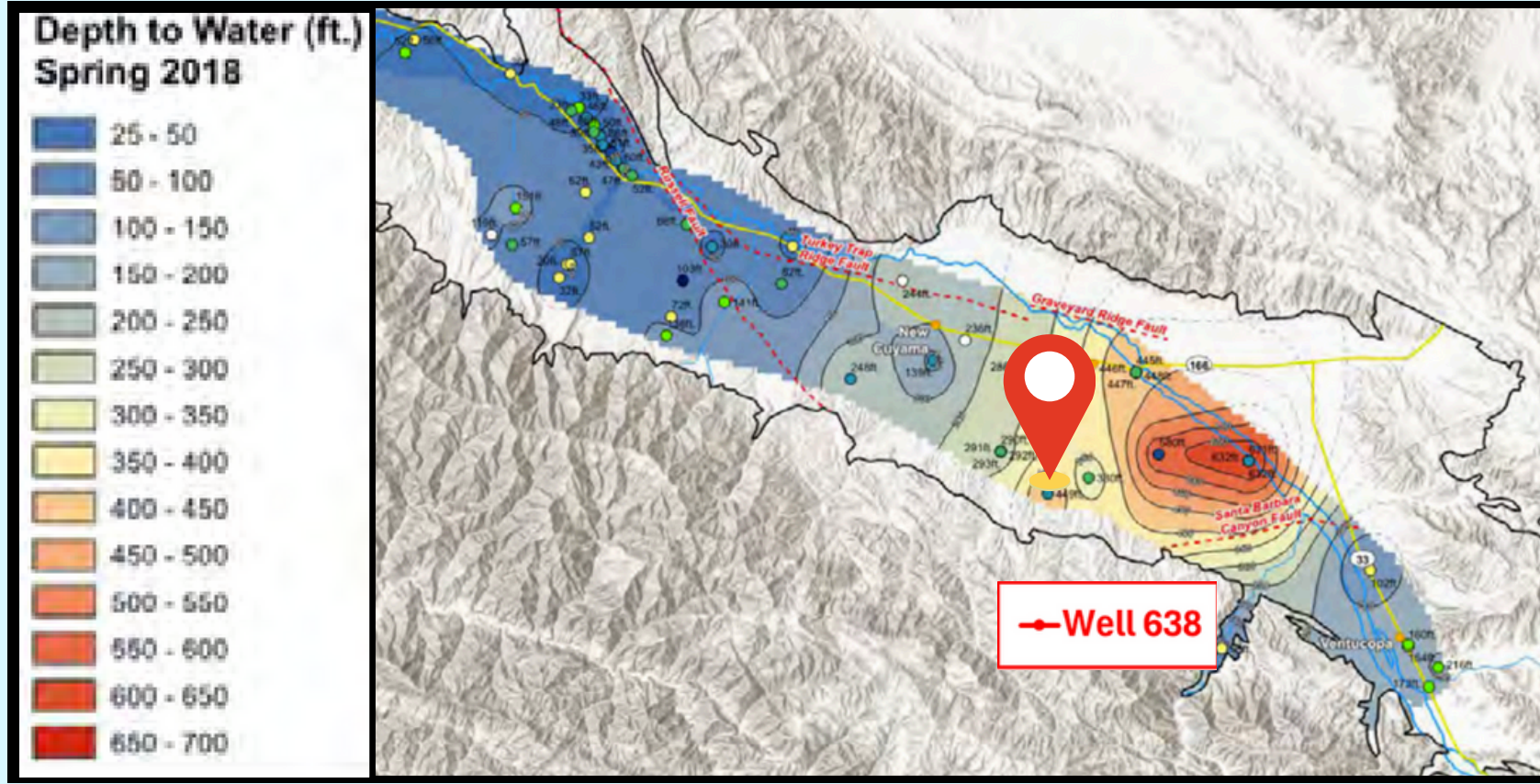
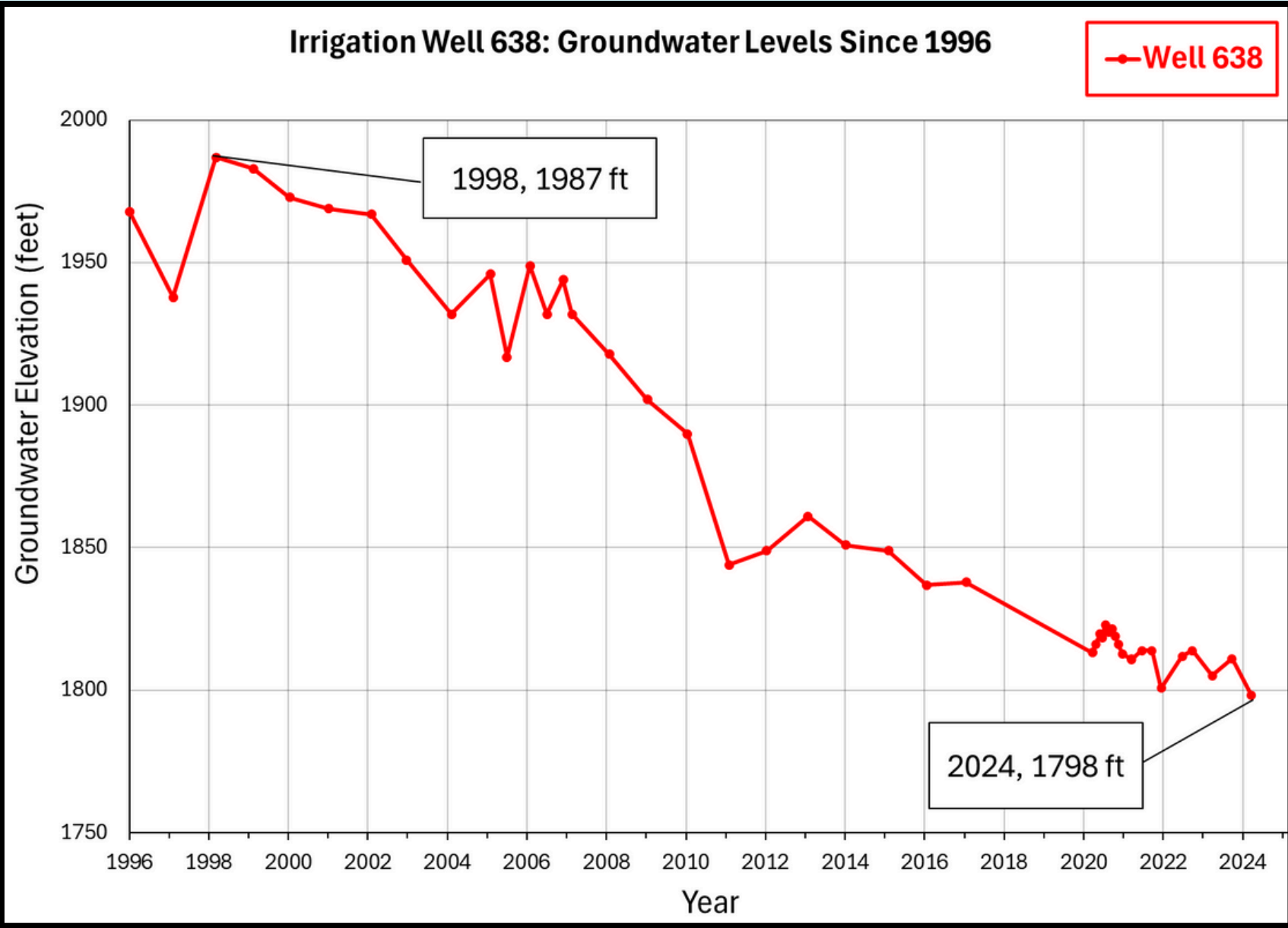


18%

of households are at or below the poverty line

7%

of impoverished households annual income is spent on bottled water



Groundwater levels have dropped **hundreds of feet** over the last two decades, causing many domestic wells to run dry

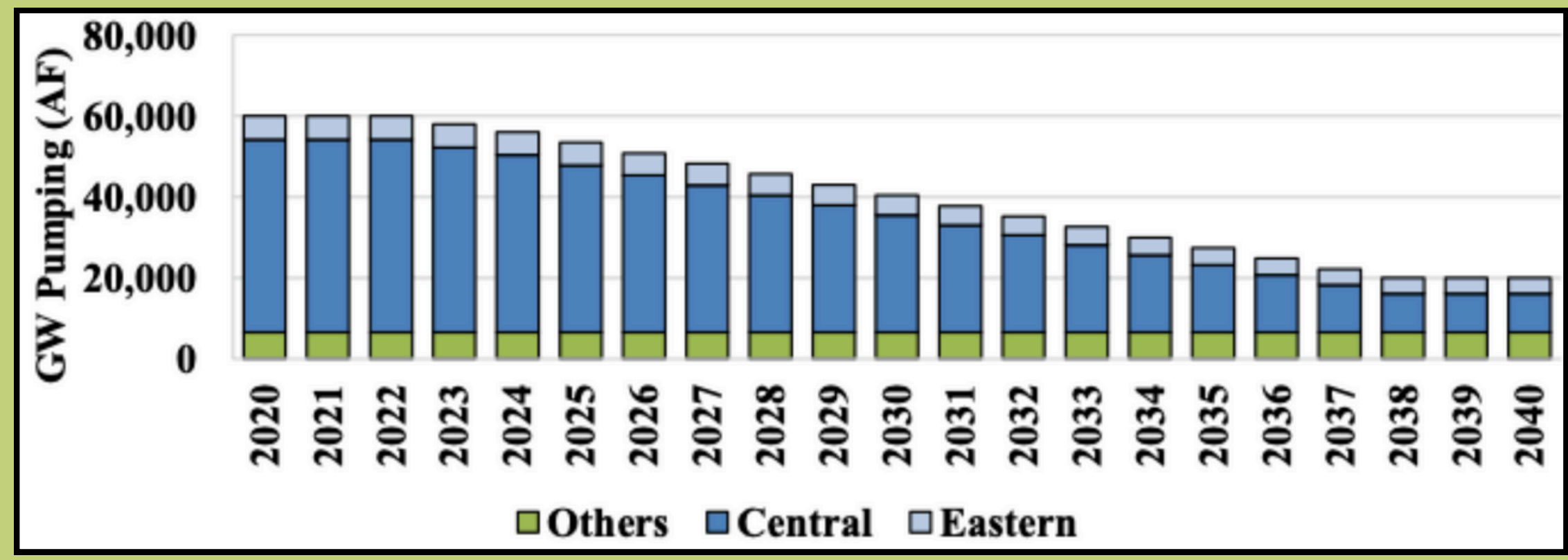
By 2040, pumping must be reduced

60%

a net reduction of 28,000 acre-feet per year

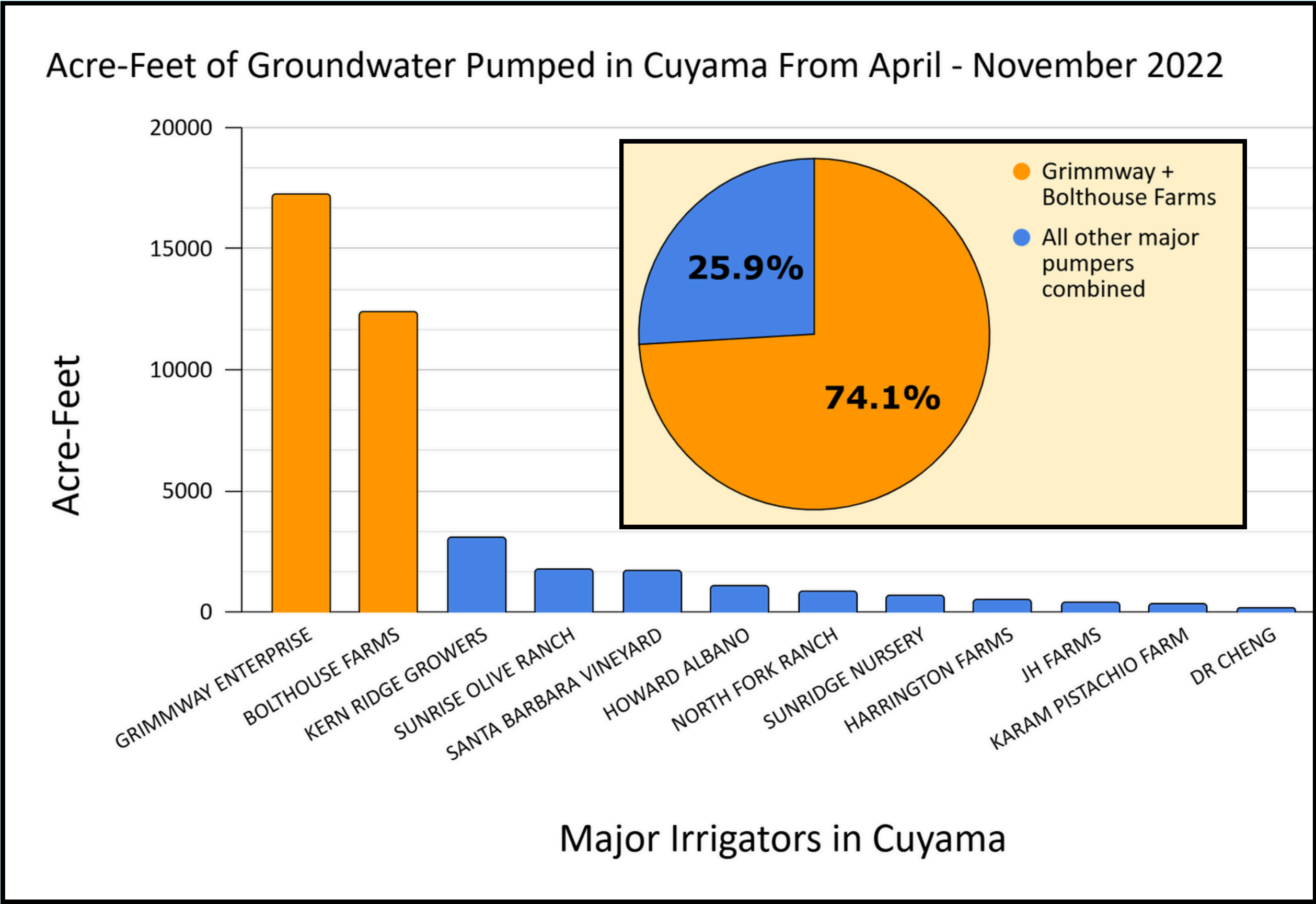
to achieve groundwater sustainability

So... whats stopping us ?



Proposed Groundwater Pumping Reductions (Cuyama Basin GSA)

How Big Carrot is Draining Cuyama



Grimmway and Bolthouse Farms, two of the world’s largest carrot corporations **pump enough water to supply a city three times the size of Santa Barbara each year.**



The Role of SGMA in the Cuyama Crisis

- The 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Managment Act (SGMA) was enacted to **prevent groundwater overuse** in California
 - Under SGMA, all critically overdrafted basins, including Cuyama, must **achieve groundwater sustainability by 2040.**
- The proposed reductions would slash gross annual revenues from carrot production from **\$69 million to \$14 million by 2040**
- Large agricultural corporations have used water adjudication to claim long-term rights to the aquifer
 - Grimmway and Bolthouse **filed for adjudication** in 2021
- Big agribusinesses can afford costly legal battles, while small farmers and residents **struggle to afford attorneys** to defend their right to water
 - Cuyama School District paid \$28,600 in legal fees
 - Cuyama Water District increased water bill by 10% to afford legal fees
- Adjudication **disadvantages small farmers** who value water conservation compared to major pumpers
 - Previously, the courts have determined groundwater allocation through **historical water use** -- whoever has used the most for the longest

Water adjudication: a legal process where the courts determine who has priority rights to groundwater

What can be done?

- • **Become familiar with the logos of the brands that come from Grimmway and Bolthouse**
 - Make conscious decisions to avoid purchasing products from these brands
- • **Challenge corporate water grabs**
 - Support legal efforts to prevent corporations from securing unfair water rights through adjudication, privatization, or political influence
- • **Advocate for stronger water protections**
 - Demand fair water policies and strict enforcement to ensure sustainability while prioritizing local communities over industrial overuse
- • **Promote sustainable solutions**
 - Push for water-efficiency farming, conservation initiatives, and alternative agricultural practices that benefit both the economy and the environment