



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Today Governor Schwarzenegger proclaimed a statewide drought and issued an Executive Order that takes immediate action to address California's dire situation. This was the first statewide drought proclamation since 1991, when Governor Wilson declared an emergency in the fifth year of a severe dry spell that extended into 1992.

Today's Executive Order directs the California Department of Water Resources to:

- ▶ Facilitate water transfers to respond to emergency shortages across the state.
- ▶ Work with local water districts and agencies to improve local coordination.
- ▶ Help local water districts and agencies improve water efficiency and conservation.
- ▶ Coordinate with other State and federal agencies and departments to assist water suppliers, identify risks to water supply and help farmers suffering losses.
- ▶ Expedite existing grant programs to help local water districts and agencies conserve.

Beginning in 2006, the Governor called for a comprehensive plan to address California's urgent water needs. He renewed that call in his 2008-09 budget by proposing an \$11.9 billion water bond for water management investments to address population growth, climate change, water supply reliability and environmental needs. Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) sustainability and water storage were two key components of the bond proposal.

Kern County receives 1/4 to 1/3 of its water from the Delta, and those supplies have been hit hard by hydrologic conditions and environmental restrictions. "The State cannot continue to subject its population and trillion-dollar economy to the uncertainties of the Delta," said Peter Frick, President of the Kern County Water Agency Board of Directors. A new canal that moves water around the Delta is critical to preserve California's economy and improve the ecosystem of the Delta. Without it, water supplies for Kern County and the rest of the state will continue to shrink.

Kern County growers and water leaders continue to develop ways to optimize limited water supplies, but this year growers are being forced to deficit-irrigate and even fallow thousands of acres of crops. The resulting impact to the local economy will exceed \$30 million.

For many years, Kern County has been at the forefront of water conservation and irrigation efficiency efforts, and these efforts will continue. However, as the Governor has communicated, water conservation alone is simply not enough. "State legislators and water leaders must act now to implement a comprehensive water plan that includes making the state's Delta water supply reliable for now and the future," said Frick.