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NEWS RELEASE

Water Shortage Will Be Today's News Conference Focus

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statements of concern about impacts of central San Joaquin Valley water supply impacts will be aired by valley elected officials this morning during a downtown Fresno news conference arranged by the California Latino Water Coalition. It will begin at 11 a.m. today (April 1) in Courthouse Park, Tulare and M streets, outside the main entrance to the Fresno County Hall of Records.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Fresno) will be one of two Congressmen speaking. In an advance statement, Costa said of the West Side water cutbacks and Delta disputes, "For far too long our livelihoods have been undermined by false science and high stakes court cases. This year especially these challenges have and will continue to cost us dearly. If we want to preserve our economy and way of life in the Valley, we must break this cycle of water insecurity which means completing and implementing the BDCP [Bay Delta Conservation Plan]."

Rep. David Valadao (R-Hanford), who since January has represented the 21st Congressional District, will also speak. "As a farmer, I have witnessed first-hand how important a reliable water supply is to Agriculture," a statement from Valadao says. "Yet, the farmers and workers that grow our food are not the only ones hurt by the water crisis. It affects every family living in the Central Valley. It is unacceptable that many Valley cities do not have access to clean water for their residents. I look forward to working with anyone who is interested in securing a reliable, clean water supply for the San Joaquin Valley."

M O R E

Also scheduled to speak are Supervisor Phil Larson of Fresno County and Richard Valle of Kings County. Other speakers will include Clovis City Council Member and former Mayor Jose Flores, and Mendota Mayor Robert Silva. Larson, Valle, Flores and Silva are all Latino Water Coalition members.

Supervisor Larson said in an advance statement, “The newest reduction to Central Valley Project water users strikes another blow to West Side farming. The result will be more land laid idle, more individuals out of work and more businesses destroyed. West Side farming and those who work in the industry had just begun to recover from the 2009 water shortage. This latest reduction will be devastating and that damage will have a huge impact on Fresno County. The real tragedy is that these reductions were not necessary. The amount of water that was allowed to flow out to the ocean in December and January would have prevented this disaster. We are now looking at massive loss of revenues that will result in individuals forced to food lines and reduction in essential services.”

“The additional water reduction is simply unacceptable and should not continue to happen almost every year,” said Assembly Member Henry T. Perea (D-Fresno), who will be unable to attend. “Without water, our farming communities cannot sustain their livelihoods, which in turn drives up food prices. This is a trickle down scenario that State and Federal officials must resolve immediately.”

Other Latino Water Coalition members planning to attend include Ruby Dhaliwal, Mayor, City of San Joaquin; Armando Lopez, Mayor, City of Parlier; Sylvia Chavez, Mayor, City of Huron; Gabriel Jimenez and Victor Lopez, Mayor and Mayor Pro-Tem, City of Orange Cove; Dan Parra, Council Member, City of Fowler; Leo Capuchino, Council Member, City of Mendota; Joe Del Bosque, Member, California Water Commission; and Manuel Cunha, President, Nisei Farmers League. (All will be available for media interviews.)

Latino Water Coalition leaders say their messages will reflect concerns about recent West Side water supply cutbacks and the circumstances cited by Larson that, on federal agency orders, resulted in 800,000 acre-feet of storm runoff water being allowed to flow into the ocean instead of being pumped from the Delta. Calls for long-term solutions will also be sounded, including support for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and Governor Brown’s proposed twin-tunnel plan to convey north state water through the Delta to export pumps near Tracy. East Side water supply reductions created by continuing drought conditions will be discussed along with the need for additional surface water storage.