



UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL
DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG
ADMINISTRATION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION,
VETERANS' AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING,
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED
AGENCIES

COMMITTEE ON BUDGET

March 28, 2024

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

Dear Commissioner Touton,

As we navigate California's 2024 water year and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) continually assesses its water management decisions, I urge Reclamation to provide a significant increase in Central Valley Project (CVP) water allocations for South-of-Delta agricultural water service and repayment contractors. While my constituents and I are thankful for this month's update that raised 15% to 35%, these allocations remain insufficient as we analyze previous actions taken by Reclamation under similar water conditions.

Following one of its wettest years on record, California once again experienced late winter atmospheric river storms with heavy snow and intense rainfall across multiple CVP watersheds. These recent storms generated high runoff and a strong snowpack that substantially increased the water supply available in California – well above 15-year averages for this time of year. Many reservoirs are operating to release water to store anticipated runoff and free up storage to prevent future flooding, and the San Luis Reservoir is close to filling its full federal share.

I understand that these are never simple decisions for Reclamation, but thankfully there is a recent precedent we can look to when making decisions for a consecutively above-average wet year. The precipitation we received this past winter exceeds that of 2018, a year that followed an exceptionally wet 2017 where 100% allocations were granted. Over the course of several months, Reclamation was able to achieve a 50% allocation for the 2018 water year. Given that the precipitation we received from 2023-2024 has already been higher than that of the 2017-2018 water year, Reclamation should be able to ensure that 2024 allocations far exceed those of 2018. Any person looking at today's statistics compared to those of the recent past would come to the logical conclusion that allocations should match – if not exceed – 2018 allocations.

The San Joaquin Valley's farmers rely on timely and accurate water allocations when planning their plantings, making financial outlook decisions, and securing business loans for expansions and upgrades. Seasonal timing is therefore essential, and I urge Reclamation to quickly maximize allocations to south-of-Delta water contractors and to work in coordination with water users to develop more refined methodology for the initial water allocations in the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Valadao', written in a cursive style.

David G. Valadao
Member of Congress