

Send water south to us

The enormity of the San Joaquin Valley drought is best explained by Bee reporter Mark Grossi (Feb. 1 and Feb. 15). At normal rainfall, we are currently short due to increased demand and years of water shortfall. Normal rain and snow pack comes to 1.5 million acre feet of water.

Storms in the western Pacific lift this amount of water into the atmosphere as clouds. These clouds drift east toward California. However, high pressure in the eastern Pacific diverts this water to Washington and Oregon. There, the rain becomes flood waters.

Here in the San Joaquin Valley, our normal water needs have been 1.5 million acre feet of water per year. This is no longer the case. Our water needs have doubled. This is due to expanded agriculture, residential development and increased pumping of our ground water.

For example, there are 3 million Valley farm acres that will not be getting any water. There are 15,000 east-side farms that will not receive water. We stand to lose half the Valley's farm income this year.

But clouds continue to drop tons of water into the Columbia River Basin. Rain becomes flood water. We need to bring that water to the Valley.

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