

Farmers don't need further water restrictions

The people of California's San Joaquin Valley are all too aware that securing a reliable and sustainable water supply continues to be the greatest challenge to our community.

This challenge has only been exacerbated over recent years by record low precipitation coupled with bureaucratic red tape.

In an effort to minimize the drastic effects of severe water shortages, for the first time ever, California State officials have ordered mandatory water reductions across the entire state. Last week, Gov. Jerry Brown announced he intends to reduce overall water use in the state by 25% within the next nine months. And while most of these restrictions will target local municipalities and landscaping efforts, farmers who have borne the brunt of the drought, will not be required to meet the same standards as other businesses under the new mandates.

While there are many issues Gov. Brown and I disagree on, I applaud him for recognizing the vital contributions farmers make to our nation. However, it is critical that the governor understand that many of our farmers have already made huge sacrifices and that even more will receive zero water allocation this year.

It is important that legislators recognize the difference between frivolous water use and our farmers critical need for water. California produces nearly half of U.S. grown fruits, nuts, and vegetables. Without adequate water supplies, our farmers cannot continue to feed our country, much less a significant portion of the world.

Farmers have already been forced to fallow hundreds of thousands of acres of productive farmland. Implementing further water restrictions will only further burden the industry, increasing grocery costs for families across the country and crippling our local economy.

The water shortages our state faces are serious. However, with common sense policies, we can take corrective measures to ease the burden on Californians.

Rep. David G. Valadao

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