

Gov. Brown must reduce water to fisheries, environment, Fresno County supervisors say

By Marc Benjamin



A delta smelt is shown in a February 2013 file photo. ERIC PAUL ZAMORA — THE FRESNO BEE

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Fresno County supervisors renewed their commitment to getting more water for the Valley by approving a more strongly worded drought resolution they expect other Valley counties will support.

The new proclamation wants federal and state agencies to curtail water supplies “currently dedicated to the environment and fisheries.”

Supervisor Henry R. Perea said that supervisors want the governor to take executive action and reduce the amount of water for the environment similar to the 25% amount demanded of urban users.

“We need more than just a declaration of an emergency, but to be very specific with the federal government and our state officials about what we are wanting and asking them to do,” Perea said.

The drought resolution approved Tuesday was discussed during a recent trip to Washington, D.C., and meetings with federal legislators and officials, Perea said.



The resolution proposes that federal drought legislation be enacted to improve water supply availability in Fresno County and the San Joaquin Valley.

Mario Santoyo, Latino Water Coalition executive director, said other county boards of supervisors are going to support the proclamation Fresno County approved Tuesday.

He also said a letter signed by 70 elected Valley officials will be sent to Gov. Jerry Brown on Wednesday.

“In my 30-plus years in water we have never been in this condition,” Santoyo said.

Even in the worst days of the late 1970s drought the water supply was 25% for east side and west side agricultural users. Today, it’s 0%.

Said Supervisor Buddy Mendes: “There are no political boundaries in the Valley when it comes to this issue.”

Contact Marc Benjamin: mbenjamin@fresnobee.com, (559) 441-6166 or [@beebenjamin](https://twitter.com/beebenjamin) on Twitter.