



Westlands Water District

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Westlands Water District

Statement from Westlands Water District on the Complaint Filed by Attorney General Becerra

On May 13, 2019, Attorney General Xavier Becerra filed a complaint against Westlands Water District. The Attorney General seeks to halt efforts by the District to consider the environmental effects of a project being studied by the United States Bureau of Reclamation – the Shasta Dam Raise Project.

In the complaint, Attorney General Becerra asserts that the District is violating Public Resources Code section 5093.542. Contrary to the allegations by the Attorney General, the District is not violating the law. The District explained its actions in two letters in February to the State Water Resources Control Board and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. As explained in those letters, if Reclamation were to decide to proceed to enlarge Shasta Dam, federal law (the Water Infrastructure Improvement for the Nation Act) requires Reclamation to have a local cost share partner(s). The District has not yet made any determination regarding the Shasta Dam Raise Project. Rather, the District is merely conducting environmental review to adequately evaluate, in part, whether Public Resources Code section 5093.543 precludes the District from becoming a local cost share partner. The District's approach to the environmental review will allow it to consider that question with the full breath of information required by the California Environmental Quality Act.

Westlands Water District supports state and federal efforts to improve water supply infrastructure, including additional surface storage, for communities throughout the state.

Westlands Water District is the largest agricultural water district in the United States, made up of more than 1,000 square miles of prime farmland in western Fresno and Kings Counties. Westlands provides water to 700 family-owned farms that average 653 acres in size.