

Trump's visit to Bakersfield remains a mystery after White House confirms travel plans

By Sam Morgen smorgen@bakersfield.com Feb 15, 2020

Days after the White House confirmed President Donald Trump would be traveling to Bakersfield next week, details remained scarce about his visit.

While Trump will be in town Wednesday to discuss agriculture issues with local farmers, as of Friday the Kern County Farm Bureau remained in the dark about the president's visit, and the Kern County Republican Party similarly had not been informed of Trump's plans.



In this file photo, President Donald Trump listens to a question during a meeting in the Oval Office of the White House. Evan Vucci

Farm Bureau President John Moore said the president could address a “laundry list” of issues facing Central Valley farmers, and added the bureau was in a holding pattern until informed of plans from federal officials.

A White House statement released to the media said Trump's Bakersfield visit would focus on efforts to dramatically improve the supply and delivery of water in California and other Western states. The president will stop at several locations on his trip to the West. The White House said he would travel to Los Angeles on Tuesday to hear an update on the 2028 Summer Olympics, and Las Vegas on Thursday to attend a prison graduation ceremony. The Associated Press reports Trump will also hold campaign rallies and fundraisers at various points in California, Colorado and Phoenix throughout next week.

Assemblyman Vince Fong praised U.S. Rep. Kevin McCarthy's efforts on behalf of Kern County farmers in response to a question about the president's visit.

McCarthy will accompany the president while in Bakersfield, according to a statement from the White House.

“The Central Valley can only continue to be the bread basket for the rest of the nation if our local farmers have access to water,” Fong wrote in an email. “The public expects our elected representatives to do what is in the best interest of the communities they serve and I believe the arrival of the President of the United States to our community represents just that.”

Rep. T.J. Cox noted his own water bill, the Move Water Now Act, was on its way to passing in the House of Representatives and would provide \$200 million to fix the Friant-Kern Canal.

“I look forward to having the president sign this vital bill because our economy depends on it,” Cox wrote in an email.

Years of overpumping have caused the Friant-Kern Canal to sink, slowing the water flow of the 152-mile waterway. Water authorities say the canal must be fixed in order to service farmers along its path.

Doing so has proved difficult, as repair costs could soar as high \$700 million.

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