

Congressman wants to RENEW the WIIN Act



San Joaquin Valley water agencies support provisions meant to aid water deliveries.
Photo: Todd Fitchette

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By: Tim Hearden
February 9, 2021

Water agencies in the San Joaquin Valley are lining up behind a bill in Congress that would extend certain provisions of the 2016 Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act meant to aid water deliveries to valley farmers.

The bill by Rep. David Valadao, R-Calif., would extend a requirement for consultation of coordinated operations of the federal Central Valley Project and California's State Water Project.

It would also keep in place the authorization of money for water storage projects approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

The leaders of agencies including Westlands Water District, Friant Water Authority and the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority [issued statements](#) backing a 10-year extension of the WIIN Act's operations and storage provisions, which are slated to sunset in December 2021.

“The WIIN Act was the most consequential water legislation for California in decades,” said Jason Phillips, the Friant Water Authority's chief executive officer. “Among other positive results, it increased water user engagement on CVP operations and authorized hundreds of millions of dollars in water infrastructure funding, some of which Friant Water Authority was grateful to access for our project to repair the Friant-Kern Canal.”

An extension of these provisions to 2031 would allow more time for the U.S. Department of the Interior to evaluate water storage projects now under review, said Paul Cook, general manager of the Irvine Ranch Water District in Southern California.

Valadao's bill – the Responsible, No-Cost Extension of Western Water Infrastructure Improvements (RENEW WIIN) Act – is his first since he was narrowly returned to Congress by voters in November after a two-year absence. It is supported by the entire Republican delegation.

“As a dairy farmer and a lifelong resident of the Central Valley, I know first-hand just how important water is to farmers and families in California,” Valadao said. “I promised my constituents that I would fight to bring more water to the valley.”

The new legislation will provide “access to safe, clean and reliable water for our communities,” he said.

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