

Farm Water News

California Farm Water Coalition

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COALITION IDENTIFIES ADDITIONAL WATER SUPPLIES

The executive director of the State's largest farm water organization called on Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to direct members of his administration to include millions of acre-feet of excess water that flows unclaimed through the Delta each year to their considerations in developing a plan to meet the State's future water needs.

In a letter to Gov. Schwarzenegger and top members of his administration, Mike Wade of the California Farm Water Coalition encouraged an approach of "how can we make it work" in seeking California's water future.

"Too often we hear that it can't be done in response to suggestions about our water future," said Wade. "Available water beyond our existing supply is waiting to be used and we must find a way to use it that will benefit all of California."

Wade pointed to a new report—"**Seeking California's Water Future**"—delivered to the Governor that suggested water normally flowing through the Delta during winter months is far in excess of what is mandated by regulation or law to protect and preserve the environment of the Delta. In 1998, a category wet year, more than 36 million acre-feet of water above mandated amounts flowed through the Delta, according to numbers compiled by the California Department of Water Resources. The report is available on the Coalition website at www.farmwater.org.

"Excess flows during a dry year might not be as readily available for other uses but when 36 million acre-feet just goes out to the ocean, then we must seriously look at how best to manage this flow of water for the benefit of all California," Wade said.

The Coalition-authored report also revealed that more than 344,000 acre-feet of water was released during 11 days in May from Folsom and Shasta reservoirs that were categorized as flood releases.

"Too much water is moving past us at certain times during the year when that same water could be used at other times if we had a place to store it," insisted Wade.

The Coalition report suggested three areas for State water planners to consider for California's water future—

1. Establish storage facilities north of the Delta and in the Sierras to capture a portion of this water before it reaches the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

2. Construct an alternate Delta conveyance system that would preserve and protect the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and its environment while supplying needed water to the southern half of the State.

3. Increase storage facilities south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to preserve the water for future use.

“It will take years to develop facilities that can make this water available for use,” Wade said. “California can no longer afford to just talk about how we need to stretch an existing supply of water to satisfy the needs of a growing population. Now is the time we must look to increase the supply of available water that will benefit everyone in California.”

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Media note: “*Seeking California’s Water Future*” is available on the Coalition website at www.farmwater.org.

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