

Benefits of proposed water bond to irrigated agriculture

The water bond includes both direct and indirect benefits to irrigated agriculture.

Groundwater. Implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) is of great importance to irrigators in the San Joaquin Valley, and in some other parts of the state. The bond act includes \$50 million to assist local agencies in planning for management of groundwater basins, and \$130 million to implement the SGMA projects.

Invasive Plants. More than a million acre feet of water are lost each year due to excessive use of water by invasive plants such as Arundo, Tamarisk, Yellow Starthistle and others. Most of this water loss occurs in or near areas of irrigated agriculture, and would become available to irrigators if these plants were reduced or eliminated. The bond act includes \$100 million for these purposes.

Watershed management. Loss of water due to excessive evapotranspiration by overgrown young forests, especially in burned over areas, reduces runoff and directly affects irrigators. The bond act includes \$150 million for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to better manage watersheds. The bond act also extensive funding for other conservancies for similar purposes.

Salton Sea. Implementation of the Quantitative Settlement Agreement on the Colorado River will help assure a reliable source of water supply in Southern California. The QSA includes better management of the Salton Sea. The bond act includes \$50 million for that purpose.

Water supply for urban areas reliant on the Delta. Cities and agriculture both place great demands on the Delta for water supply. To the extent that cities become more self-reliant on water, their demand on the Delta will be reduced, providing more water for irrigation.

The bond act includes \$400 million for wastewater recycling, \$400 million for groundwater desalination, and \$300 million for urban water conservation. Substantial funds are also included for stormwater capture and watershed management in urban areas. Taking matching fund requirements into account, these programs should result in a water supply increase of at least one million acre feet in urban areas.

Since population growth has not resulted in substantial increases in urban demand in the past twenty years, most of this new water should go to replace demand on the delta, especially in dry years. This is because most of the water supply sources provided by the bond act are reliable in both wet and dry years.