

Bakersfield, CA – Today, Congressman McCarthy joined several of his California colleagues for a House Natural Resources Water and Power Subcommittee-led forum on resolving the man-made San Joaquin Valley water crisis in Fresno, CA. Joining Congressman McCarthy as an expert witness was local farmer and Kern County Water Agency Director Fred Starrh from Starrh and Starrh Cotton Growers.

Congressman McCarthy made the following statement at today's forum:

"Mr. McClintock, thank you for your work in organizing this event. I appreciate all of you who are joining us here today, especially Fred Starrh, a Kern County farmer and a Director of the Kern County Water Agency, who came up here today to talk about the significant impacts from the water crisis on my constituents in Bakersfield and our region."

"What we don't appreciate is Washington refusing to listen, once again, by rejecting our invitation to participate. To this Administration, this is just business as usual - providing lip service to the problems of this Valley – giving hope, but providing no change."

"We are in a dire water situation in our state, regardless of recent rain. We are facing a situation where a tiny fish is taking precedence over our local farmers and workers, which is killing jobs and our local economies. We can no longer allow out-of-touch environmentalists to hold our state's economy and well-being hostage, and allow hard-working Californians to suffer."

"This issue comes down to one thing: Jobs. We have all seen the signs along our roads reminding drivers that "Food Grows Where Water Flows." These signs could just as well say "Jobs Grow Where Water Flows." Over 25 million Californians and thousands of acres of farmland receive their water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta region. In Kern County alone, agriculture production has an annual gross production value of over \$4 billion. This is a vital part of our economy, but water shortages continue to threaten our county and contribute to our double-digit unemployment."

“Our water supplies have literally dried up. The initial allocation for State Water Project contractors this year is 5% - the lowest in the history of the project, and our constituents still have to pay for the water they don’t get. The Central Valley Project allocation is expected to also be a fraction of the needed amount. We all know that this results in fewer crops, and higher unemployment.

“The sad part here is that there are solutions, but they are being ignored. My colleagues and I have introduced and continue to ask for votes on bills and amendments that will help fix this man-made drought. But these bills die because Nancy Pelosi and her Democrat will not even allow us an up or down vote on the floor. This is why my friend Devin Nunes introduced a discharge petition for the Turn on the Pumps Act to force a vote on that important bill.

“So we are here today to highlight this water crisis, and to highlight that the inaction of Speaker Pelosi and her colleagues is costing our region jobs and parching our lands so that we can’t grow the food California needs. In fact, the only thing her inaction has grown is the number of unemployed Californians in the Valley. We will not allow the lack of action to go unnoticed, so today we send another public message to Speaker Pelosi and the Democrat-controlled Congress – “Jobs Grow Where Water Flows”.”

Congressman McCarthy has also cosponsored the following bills to help alleviate the man-made water crisis in the San Joaquin Valley:

- H.R. 3105, the Turn on the Pumps Act, which would allow for the continued operation of the Central Valley Project, which would help get more water back into our communities regardless of biological opinions issued under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. McCarthy also signed a discharge petition to force an up or down vote on this legislation.
- H.R. 856, which would increase water deliveries to the Central Valley and Southern California urban and agriculture users by waiving regulations regarding the Delta Smelt at Delta pumps during times of drought.
- H.R. 996, which would increase water deliveries by temporarily exempting the operations of any water supply or flood control project from ESA when the Governor declares an emergency.