

Dear Friend,

I don't have to tell you that water is the lifeblood of our communities. Last year alone, Kern County produced \$4.7 billion worth of crops – grapes, almonds, pistachios, milk and citrus topped the list – that supported countless jobs, families and small businesses in our communities. Our production of agricultural products also adds to our district's impressive export market. In 2010, \$44.3 billion in merchandise was exported from local businesses and those exports directly support 139,627 jobs. Revenues coming in from our exports are bound to increase with the recent passage of Free Trade Agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea. But without water, which supports our crops and businesses, these benefits would go unrealized. And that's another reason why ensuring a reliable water supply remains one of my top priorities.

On Friday, I was honored to be the Keynote Speaker at the Vision 2061 water conference put on by the Kern County Water Agency (KCWA). The conference commemorated KCWA's impressive 50-year history and brought together water leaders from around the state to discuss the challenges to our water supply over the next 50 years and share ideas on how we can overcome them.

The challenges are clear. We face a rapidly expanding population (our 37 million is projected to grow to 60 million by 2050), government overregulation and over-litigation, as well as the continued threat of natural and man-made droughts. Our community is still reeling from the most recent drought. Even with an official end declared by Governor Brown and a snowpack that peaked at 165 percent of average, our families and farmers still only received 80 percent of the water they were entitled to this year.

The good news is that from cutting unnecessary red tape to building additional storage and conveyance systems and continuing to innovate for conservation, there are ways to get water flowing more reliably through California. More importantly, there are some great minds committed to getting it done. After all, the KCWA isn't one of the world's leading water agencies for no reason.

For my part, I am supporting several pieces of legislation that will help ensure a more reliable water supply now and in the future. From the [San Joaquin Valley Water Reliability Act](#) , which

repeals cumbersome government regulations that limit water deliveries, to [legislation](#) that cuts red tape for Central Valley Water Projects by deeming Federal environmental requirements satisfied with the completion of similar state environmental ones, and a [bill](#) to raise the spillway on the New Exchequer Dam to let out approximately 70,000 acre feet of additional water, these efforts would help bring more water home.

I know much more must be done, and I am confident this conference and future meetings will prove an important step toward collective action to build a more reliable water supply system in our state.

I remain committed to ensuring our families, businesses, farmers and ranchers receive every drop of water possible and will continue to fight for policies to get it done. But I also want to hear your thoughts on water. What policies and efforts do you think should be pursued to ensure a reliable water supply for the next 50 years and beyond? [Send me an email](#) to share your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Congressman Kevin McCarthy