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Friant Water Authority Adds Members, New Board Officers Take Positions

Lindsay, Calif. – During its first Board of Directors meeting of the year today, the Friant Water Authority (FWA) approved the addition of two member districts, and welcomed three new officers to positions on the Board.

During the meeting, the Board approved membership agreements for Madera Irrigation District and Hills Valley Irrigation District. Both districts were previously members of FWA. Madera Irrigation District left the organization in 2015 during a period when the Friant Division was challenged by two consecutive years without a contract water supply allocation from the Bureau of Reclamation. With both districts rejoining, FWA now represents the largest portion of the Friant Division of any organization, both in terms of acreage and Central Valley Project contract water supplies. Madera Irrigation District includes 131,000 acres and 271,000 acre-feet of contract supply, and Hills Valley Irrigation District has 1,250 acre-feet of contract supply.

“Today’s Friant Water Authority is a very different organization from the one Madera Irrigation District voted to leave in 2015,” said James Erickson, Madera Irrigation District Board President. “Guided by Chief Executive Officer Jason Phillips, the Friant Water Authority Board and staff have made some tremendous improvements in how they conduct business, build relationships, and get results that benefit both our growers and the entire Friant Division. This was directly related to our decision to rejoin Friant.”

“We believe that Friant Water Authority has proved itself to be a good value for its members and the farmers and communities they represent, which is why our Board voted to come back,” said Loren Booth, Hills Valley Irrigation District Board President.

In addition to the two districts rejoining, three Board members participated in the first meeting of 2017 in new leadership roles to which they were nominated during the Board’s December 9, 2016, meeting. Kent Stephens, of Kern-Tulare Water District, assumed the position of Chairman. Kent served as Vice Chairman in 2016. Chris Tantau, of Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District, now serves as Vice Chairman. Georgeanne White, of the City of Fresno and the designated alternate for Mayor Lee Brand, now serves as Secretary/Treasurer. These officers will hold their positions through the end of 2018.

“Last year, Friant Water Authority changed how we operated and worked to better integrate Friant

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Division farmers in oversight and decision-making,” said Kent Stephens, FWA Board Chair. “I’m honored by the confidence my fellow Board members and the Friant community have placed in me, and I’m excited about our plans for 2017 to build upon the successes of last year.”

FWA is a joint-powers authority formed in 2004 by a majority of the water agencies receiving water from the Friant Division of the Central Valley Project. Its primary purposes are to operate and maintain the Friant-Kern Canal and to serve the information and representation needs of its member agencies.

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