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Friant Water Authority Welcomes Back Fresno Irrigation District and Chowchilla Water District as General Members

TULARE, CA – The Friant Water Authority (FWA) Board of Directors yesterday voted to approve an agreement for Fresno Irrigation District (FID) to join the organization as a general member and an operations and maintenance (O&M) project member. During its January 25 meeting, the FWA Board also approved an agreement for Chowchilla Water District (CWD) to rejoin as a general member.

FID and CWD were among the original members of FWA when it was formed as a joint-powers authority in 2004. In 2015, both districts left FWA to form Friant North Authority, along with Madera Irrigation District and Gravelly Ford Water District. In 2017 FID and CWD joined FWA as a “trial member” and “associate member,” respectively. CWD is approximately 85,000 acres and holds a Class 1 contract for 55,000 acre-feet and a Class 2 contract for 160,000 acre-feet – some of the largest contracts in the Friant Division of the Central Valley Project. At 250,000 acres, FID has one of the biggest footprints in the Friant Division; the district holds a Class 2 contract for 75,000 acre-feet.

“A year ago we agreed to join Friant Water Authority in a trial capacity because we knew the organization had undertaken some welcome changes,” said FID Assistant General Manager Bill Stretch. “Over the past year, we’ve had the chance observe those improvements firsthand, which led us to this decision to rejoin fully.”

“Chowchilla Water District voted last year to rejoin Friant Water Authority because we saw a tremendous improvement in its staff and operations, and we’re confident that the organization will continue to represent its members and work tirelessly to protect the water interests of the valley’s eastside,” said Kole Upton, CWD President.

“As two of the largest Friant Division contractors – both in acreage and water contracts – CWD and FID are critical voices for growers in the valley. We’re pleased to welcome them both back to Friant Water Authority – an organization they helped found nearly 15 years ago,” said FWA Board Chair Kent Stephens.

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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.