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## **SB 559 Fails This Year, Resulting in Potential Delays on Critical Water Project**

The 2019 legislative deadline has passed without a successful resolution for work needed to restore conveyance capacity on the Friant-Kern Canal. Both Senate Bill (SB) 559, which was a legislative measure introduced by State Senator Melissa Hurtado to create the framework for a State, local, and federal partnership on this project, and a subsequent General Fund budget request to fund the State investment, were rejected.

This is a disappointing outcome for everyone, including the San Joaquin Valley cities, towns, farms and disadvantaged communities whose drinking water and economic future are directly connected to the water flowing through the Friant-Kern Canal. This project was and is an opportunity for the State to lead a partnership for repairing a facility that benefits all of California and to achieve key policy goals related to achieving sustainable groundwater management and clean drinking water. While the specific impacts to the Friant-Kern Canal Capacity Correction Project have not been identified, there is a possibility that schedule delays will occur.

SB 559, which would have authorized a State investment of up to \$400 million in the Friant-Kern Canal Capacity Correction Project, had enjoyed very successful bipartisan and bicameral support in the California Legislature all year. The entire southern San Joaquin Valley delegation in the State Assembly and the State Senate were coauthors on SB 559, and their leadership was instrumental in the bill's success. SB 559 faced only minor opposition in the Senate, and unanimous support in the Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife, where it was amended with some common-sense changes

that would hold all parties accountable for investing taxpayer funds in this critical piece of infrastructure.

While \$400 million would have provided the necessary fix, even a small amount of State funding would have kept the Friant-Kern Canal Capacity Correction Project on schedule. Additionally, it would have signaled to other partners the State's commitment and would have encouraged optimism that the Valley's needs were not going to be dismissed yet again.

Looking ahead to the next 20 years and beyond, the needed infrastructure work on many Valley canals will continue to be a major issue that isn't going away without significant attention and investment from all who have a stake in the health of our State and region. In fact, each year that California does not deal with aging infrastructure statewide, conditions only worsen and begin to resemble third-world conditions, especially in the San Joaquin Valley.

Collectively, we remain committed to working towards creating a successful partnership for funding and implementing the Friant-Kern Canal Capacity Correction Project with our federal, State, and local agency partners. Additionally, we will enthusiastically support funding for other critical water infrastructure projects in the Valley – both on the eastside and westside. This will only succeed as a shared effort, so we must work together. It has taken decades to get to where we stand today and it will take years of dedicated leadership to remedy the crisis. We will not relent in providing leadership on this issue as long as it's needed and are committed to doing whatever is necessary to secure the Valley's future.