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STATEMENT FROM FRIANT WATER AUTHORITY ON RECLAMATION'S INITIAL 2020 CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT ALLOCATION

Today's allocation for the Central Valley Project by the Bureau of Reclamation of only 15% of the South-of-Delta agricultural contract amount and 7% of the total Friant Division contract amount is reflective of one of the driest Februarys seen in the Central Valley. Although the announcement is disappointing, we have no doubt that given this year's hydrology, without the operational flexibility provided in the new Biological Opinions, Reclamation would not have been able to provide contractors an allocation at all this early in the year. Thus, we are extremely appreciative of the current Biological Opinions, as it's clear they are already achieving some of their anticipated positive impacts on Central Valley Project operations and water supply reliability for Reclamation's customers. We're also hopeful that if the hydrology and snowpack improves, so will the allocation.

Nonetheless, with such a low initial allocation, we anticipate that growers throughout the south San Joaquin Valley and on the Eastside will need to rely heavily on groundwater supplies, which is likely to further exacerbate the type of regional land elevation subsidence that has so dramatically reduced the capacity of the Friant-Kern Canal. This makes our efforts to repair the facility even more urgent and underscores the need for resolving the valley's long-term water imbalance.

Pray for rain and snow.