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Contact: Johnny Amaral (559-799-6192)
Alex Biering (916-628-0431)

STATEMENT FROM FRIANT WATER AUTHORITY ON EMERGENCY CURTAILMENT REGULATIONS

The following statement from Friant Water Authority Chief Executive Officer Jason Phillips addresses emergency regulations the State Water Resources Control Board adopted during its August 3, 2021, meeting:

This spring and summer, it became clear to many in the California water community that Federal and State project water stored in upstream reservoirs, and which is being released to meet critical water supply and water quality needs for humans and the ecosystem, is largely being diverted illegally in the Delta. These diversions are happening for weeks or even months at a time when there is little-to-no natural Delta inflow, which means that the water supply available is insufficient to support legal diversions by most water rights holders in the Delta.

Friant Water Authority (FWA) recognizes that on the surface, the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) potential curtailment actions would appear to some to be adding fuel to a fire, but we view the announcement by the SWRCB as a first step to ensure that those diverters without legal rights to an already limited water supply adhere to the State's water rights system.

During one of the driest water years on record statewide, it is critical that – at a minimum – the SWRCB protect this water that has been legally stored and should be used this year for meeting upstream storage targets, temperature management, and south-of-Delta demands. For this reason, FWA is supportive of the SWRCB acting to exercise its responsibility to curtail these unauthorized diversions to protect previously stored water during the 2021 water year. However, until and unless hydrologic conditions dictate that the emergency curtailments should be extended, they should expire at the end of September 2021.