



MID Lifts Limits on Water Supply After Late Season Storms

Concerns remain about next year's supply

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MERCED, CA – Merced Irrigation District has removed all supply limitations on water use this year.

Following a motion by Director Dave Long, and a second by Director Gino Pedretti, today the Board voted unanimously to lift limits on water supplies to irrigators within Merced Irrigation District. This also includes the water users of the El Nido area, who had been limited to 50 percent of MID's available water supply. This was consistent with the terms and conditions of the El Nido Irrigation District consolidation.

Board President Suzy Hultgren and Director Tim Pellissier agreed with staff reports which cautioned MID growers of the likelihood they will face a challenging water supply next year.

The Board left intact a tiered pricing mechanism of an additional \$5 per acre foot for water use above 2.5 acre feet per acre per water account number. The additional revenue will help offset the costs of pumping groundwater earlier in the season as well as additional pumping that will be required over the season to limit operational spills.

Deputy General Manager Hicham Eltal warned that the District faces the significant likelihood of another dry year next year. The warning is based on historical analysis of data maintained by MID showing that drought years typically occur in pairs.

"Unless we receive above-average precipitation in the coming winter, we are likely to face another challenging year," he said. "MID will be forced to severely limit available water supply next year if mother nature doesn't bail us out with substantial snowpack."

Earlier in the season, MID had established an allotment of 4-acre-feet per acre for MID water customers and 2 acre feet per acre for Class II water users in the former El Nido Irrigation District. At the time, the District was facing the potential to be the driest year in 108 years of records maintained by MID.

A series of late-season storms helped provide 170,000 acre feet of additional supply in Lake McClure for a total of 280,000 acre feet, according to the California Department of Water Resources.

Board Director Pellissier specifically warned growers at today's meeting that although the water was being made available, they should plan for a dry year next year.

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