



MID approves 2018 irrigation season

Orders taken now; deliveries begin around March 1

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Following a six-week public process, today the MID Board of Directors approved both the start of irrigation season and the water rate for the coming year.

“So far, the winter weather has not been favorable to local agriculture,” said MID General Manager John Sweigard after the meeting. “We want to ensure that we are being as responsive to our growers as possible. We want them to have the water they need as quickly as possible.”

Water orders can be placed immediately. The first deliveries are expected to occur around March 1. There will be no restrictions on allocations this year and water will be made available to neighboring Sphere of Influence (SOI) lands. Those are lands just outside the District boundaries but still within the eastern Merced groundwater basin.

The in-District water rate for the coming season was set at \$40 per acre foot for all MID growers. Neighboring SOI growers will have access to surface water at \$100 per acre foot.

Today’s decisions were made following nearly two hours of open discussion between the MID Board of Directors, the MID Advisory Committee and other interested members of the public.

Options for ordering water include:

- Orders may be placed anytime online at www.mercedid.org.
- Orders may be placed anytime using MID’s automated water ordering system at (866) 825-2475. During weekday business hours, orders may also be placed by calling MID Customer Service at (209) 722-2720 or toll-free at (800) 750-2720.
- Orders may be placed in person during weekday business hours at MID’s office, located at 744 W. 20th Street in Merced.

WATER SUPPLY

Following five years of drought, Lake McClure experienced one of the wettest years on record last winter. The reservoir easily filled to its maximum capacity and remains at its maximum-allowed operating level at

this time of year. That's about 67 percent capacity or 667,000 acre feet. In discussing the water outlook for the year, MID opted to make all water available to growers for the coming season without restriction.

GROUNDWATER BENEFITS

Providing surface water from Lake McClure to area growers provides a crucial benefit to area groundwater. MID and SOI growers will not have to depend on groundwater pumping for irrigation. Additionally, MID's operations result each year in up to 140,000 acre feet of groundwater replenishment as water flows through unlined waterways and MID-operated groundwater recharge basins. Groundwater management has become a top priority in the region since the state approved the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. MID is one of multiple urban and rural partners working jointly to address groundwater challenges in eastern Merced County.

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