



# Committee Action

## NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN DOC HASTINGS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Monday, March 21, 2011  
[PERMALINK](#)

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\*\*\***MEDIA ADVISORY**\*\*\*

## Water and Power Subcommittee to hold Fresno Field Hearing on the Man-Made Drought in California

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – On Monday, April 11, 2011 the House Natural Resources Committee’s Subcommittee on Water and Power will hold a field hearing in Fresno, California on “*Creating Jobs by Overcoming Man-Made Drought: Time for Congress to Listen and Act.*”

The hearing will examine federal government policies that have created and contributed to California’s man-made drought and the actions needed to supply the San Joaquin Valley with water to put thousands back to work, feed the nation and grow the economy.

*“Just like my home state of Washington, a large portion of California’s economy is dependent on a steady and reliable water supply. Over the last few years, government bureaucrats have greatly restricted the water supply to the California farms that help feed our country,” said Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04). “It is inexcusable for thousands to be without work and hundreds of thousands of fertile farm acres to sit fallow. This hearing gives us an opportunity to hear directly from Valley growers and farm workers who have been on the brink of losing their livelihoods due to the government’s man-made drought.”*

*“There is no time to waste on reversing the plight of the San Joaquin Valley. The deliberate diversions by the federal government of over 303 billion gallons of water away from the breadbasket of America cost tens of thousands of farm workers their jobs, inflicted up to 40 percent unemployment rates in the region, fallowed more than 150,000 acres of the most fertile farmland in our nation, and forced up the price of groceries across the country,” said Water and Power Subcommittee Chairman Tom McClintock (CA-04). “The facts we gather from this hearing will be instrumental as we begin the process to rescind government policies at the root of the San Joaquin Valley’s misery.”*

*“Even in wet years such as this one, fellow farmers in the Central Valley are encountering a man-made drought. This field hearing will provide an excellent opportunity to talk on the record with water managers, farmers, and the Obama Administration about why reduced water allocations put in place by the Administration are damaging the Valley and to determine what new legislation is needed to rectify the situation,” said Rep. Jeff Denham (CA-19). “With reservoirs in flood operations, it is inexcusable that farmers are only being*

*allocated 50% of the water they have a contract for and this hearing is the first step in resolving the issue."*

*"The deliberate management of California's water infrastructure to deprive the people access to water should alarm everyone in America. For years, the left has used the environment as an excuse to take more and more of this precious resource away from the people," said Rep. Devin Nunes (CA-21). "It is time for Congress to give it back so that our economy, our farms, and our rural communities can thrive."*

*"It is unacceptable that Federal and state government laws and regulations are creating a man-made drought that is threatening Kern County farmers and local agricultural jobs. One only has to look at the signs that are seen up and down the Central Valley, 'food grows where water flows.' Unlike the last Congress when Democrats refused to address this issue and work to find commonsense solutions, I am extremely pleased House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Hastings and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power Chairman McClintock will be holding a vital field hearing in the State of California to address our current water shortages," said House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy (CA-22). "This hearing not only provides Kern County residents an opportunity to give the Committee a firsthand account of the devastating impact government policies are having, but to develop real solutions that ensure Central Valley residents have access to water they need that is necessary to create jobs in our local agricultural industry. I look forward to working with Chairmen Hastings and McClintock and my colleagues in the Valley to getting water flowing again in the state."*

**WHO:** House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings  
Water and Power Subcommittee Chairman Tom McClintock (CA-04)  
Rep. Jeff Denham (CA-19)  
Rep. Devin Nunes (CA-21)  
Potentially other Members of Congress

**WHAT:** Subcommittee on Water and Power Field Hearing on *"Creating Jobs by Overcoming Man-Made Drought: Time for Congress to Listen and Act."*

**WHERE:** Fresno City Council Chambers  
2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, California 93721

**WHEN:** Monday, April 11, 2011  
10:00am – 1:00pm PDT (*approximate*)

**Background:**

- California's water storage and transportation system includes 1,200 miles of canals and nearly 50 reservoirs that provide water to 23 million people and irrigate four million acres of land throughout the state.
- In May 2007, a Federal District Court Judge ruled that increased amounts of water had to be re-allocated towards protecting the Delta smelt – a three-inch fish on the Endangered Species List. Water is also re-allocated for salmon.

- Because of this ruling, more than 300 billion gallons of water were diverted last year away from San Joaquin Valley farmers to the Pacific Ocean. Some nearby communities experienced massive unemployment as a result.
- Sierra Nevada snowpack is at near record levels but San Joaquin Valley farmers may only get 50% of their water allocations this year while at least 23 billion gallons is currently being flushed to the ocean each day, keeping thousands out of work.
- Because California is the number one agricultural producer in the United States, no water means a smaller food supply, higher food prices nationwide, and increased reliance on foreign food sources.

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