

Trump Oct. 19 Presidential Memorandum on Western Water: The Paradigm Shift Opens a New Flank

By Patrick Ruckert

Oct. 20 (EIRNS)--For the first time in more than 50 years. The President of the United States is taking responsibility for ensuring that the nation's largest state and the provider of more than 50% of the nation's fruits, vegetables and nuts will have adequate water for its people and agriculture. Not since President John Kennedy has a U.S. President done so. Like the President's attacks on the global warming fraud, his action on the California water issue opens a new front in a war against those who wish to depopulate the planet.

On Friday, President Donald Trump, while in Arizona, signed a Presidential Memorandum that has California farmers cheering and environmentalists jeering. While there is much noise about the President's action, what it will mean in actually dealing with the Western States' (and California's in particular) ongoing water shortages remains unclear and it will have no noticeable effect for some time.

California's water problem has been decades in the making, and while certain short-term actions can help to provide more water to especially the farmers of California's Central Valley, no tweaking of the existing water management system of the state can actually ensure adequate water supplies for the state's 40 million people. It has been more than 40 years since any major water project in the state has been built. At that time, the state had the world's largest and most complex water management system. Now, the situation is dire. (See relevant background below)

The Memorandum signed by Trump yesterday begins with this:

"Section 1. Policy. During the 20th Century, the Federal Government invested enormous resources in water infrastructure throughout the western United States to reduce flood risks to communities; to provide reliable water supplies for farms, families, businesses, and fish and wildlife; and to generate dependable hydropower. Decades of uncoordinated, piecemeal regulatory actions have diminished the ability of our Federal infrastructure, however, to deliver water and power in an efficient, cost effective way. Unless addressed, fragmented regulation of water infrastructure will continue to produce inefficiencies, unnecessary burdens, and conflict among the Federal Government, States, tribes, and local public agencies that deliver water to their citizenry. To meet these challenges, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce should, to the extent permitted by law, work together to minimize unnecessary regulatory burdens and foster more efficient decision-making so that water projects are better able to meet the demands of their authorized purposes."

The rest of the Memorandum provides directions on how to address the inefficiencies, unnecessary burdens, and conflicts. Or, in non-bureaucratic language, how to get more water to farmers by somehow speeding up and altering existing studies, court decisions and state and federal regulations. Some of those directions include:

- Streamline regulatory processes and remove unnecessary burdens.

- Develop a timeline for completing compliance requirements for major water projects.

- Responsibly expedite ongoing environmental reviews.

- Convene water experts and resource managers to develop an action plan for improving seasonal forecasts of water availability.

- Expand the use of technologies to improve the delivery of water and power.

- Consider the laws of local operators during hydroelectric re-licensing proceedings.

The President was joined at the signing ceremony by five Central Valley members of Congress: Kevin McCarthy, Devin Nunes, David Valadao, Jeff Denham, Tom McClintock, and Doug LaMalfa. They issued a statement following the ceremony, which other members of Congress signed on to, which stated, in part:

"Due to the actions of environmental extremists and overzealous bureaucrats, California has been suffering from a years-long water crisis that has wreaked havoc in Central Valley farming communities that feed tens of millions of Americans. Productive land has gone fallow and farmworkers have lost their jobs. Communities across California have also been devastated as senseless government regulations have mandated that billions of gallons of water be flushed out to the ocean and wasted. Now, with this executive action, there is a strict timetable for rewriting the biological opinions that lie at the root of the water crisis. This executive action also prioritizes building critical projects to expand water storage in our state so that we can store more water during wet years for use in dry years."

And Congressman Devin Nunes, whose family has farmed in the Central Valley for decades, speaking at the ceremony, identified Trump as the first President since JFK To address California's water problems. Nunes said:

"This is the first time since JFK we have had a president come to the Valley and act on what he said he was going to act on. That goes back to the 1960s. So, Mr. President, you came out not once, but twice. You made a commitment in 2016, and today you're fulfilling that commitment, because we have been overlooked for a very long time in the Central Valley, which is the breadbasket of the world."

Cheers for the President also came from the California Farm Bureau, California Farm Water Coalition, Family Farm Alliance and Western Growers.

On the other hand, the environmentalists, led by Gov. Jerry Brown, who has declared war on President Trump over the issue of global warming, are not too happy. Rep. John Garamendi, a Democrat, invoked the Confederate argument that the President is undermining states' rights to control its own water destiny by his actions.

Four years ago voters in the state passed a water bond that included more than \$2 billion for new water storage projects like dams and reservoirs. Finally, this year, the commission established to allocate the funds has made a decision on which projects will get funding. Yet, still no money has been spent.

This is the kind of bureaucratic delay for necessary infrastructure that the President is attempting to end. While this is a state program, the import of his action is to create a paradigm shift in thinking that will affect how things are done at every level of government.

Background: California Water Management System

The two major projects of the California water management system are the FDR-built Central Valley Project and the California State Water Project built by Gov. Pat Brown beginning in the 1960s. President Kennedy in 1963, in cooperation with Governor Brown, then tied the two projects together with a cooperation agreement. Recognizing that the system would be adequate for the state's population for about 30 years, the Kennedy Administration, political leaders and engineering firms initiated two projects that, had they not been cancelled after the assassination of Kennedy, would have not only provided the water future generations would require, but would have created a large-scale water management system covering most of North America.

Those two projects were the North American Water and Power Alliance (NAWAPA) and the building of nuclear-powered desalination plants--two programs, promoted for decades by the LaRouche organization. Beginning in 1992, it became clear that the system could no longer provide the water the people of the state required--the system had reached that breaking point foreseen by the great builders

of the 1930s through the 1960s.

Adding to the actual physical limits of the system, the environmentalist Nazis set out to shut down California agriculture by a step by step series of court rulings and regulations that restricted the pumping of water to the Central Valley farmers. Thus began California's Water Wars. Federal and state legislation and court decisions over more than two decades now have resulted in millions of acre feet of water being allowed to flow into San Francisco Bay rather than to be pumped into the two aqueducts of the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project.

The core issue has been, and is today, the disputed claim that by releasing more water through the Bay Delta, endangered salmon and the Delta Smelt will be saved from extinction. Over more than two decades now, no matter how much water is diverted to saving the fish, the extinction of at least the Delta Smelt is going to occur anyway. And as droughts have become more intense and lasted longer, farmers have increased the pumping of ground water to grow their crops, resulting in a rapid depletion of the state's aquifers. Yet despite the pumping of ground water, during the last five year drought about 500,000 acres of the best farm land in the world was fallowed.