

NEWS RELEASE



Farmington Groundwater Recharge Program

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GROUNDWATER RECHARGE CELEBRATES MILESTONE

Local legislator pledges Federal funding for Farmington Groundwater Recharge Program

Calling groundwater recharge critical for Eastern San Joaquin County's future, U.S. Representative Richard Pombo today announced inclusion of \$1.5 million in additional Federal funding for the Farmington Groundwater Recharge Program in a House appropriations bill.

The announcement occurred as area water planners, legislators and landowners celebrated completion of a 60-acre groundwater recharge project at Stockton East Water District (SEWD). The project is the largest direct groundwater recharge project in the region since 1993. The appropriations request – submitted by Pombo and U.S. Representative Dennis Cardoza – would bring to \$3 million the amount of additional Federal funding approved by Congress since 2002.

“Without water, crops and communities wither and struggle to survive,” Pombo said from the project's levee. “Through this investment in the Farmington Groundwater Recharge Program, Eastern San Joaquin County continues its mission to restore an underground resource in chronic overdraft.”

The Farmington Groundwater Recharge Program is a \$33.5 million effort lead by SEWD in partnership with the Sacramento District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for restoration of the region's groundwater supply and repel saline water intrusion. The program goal is to spread an average of 35,000 acre-feet of water annually on 800 to 1,200 acres of land through short- and long-term agreements with landowners. Because recharge operations occur during the fall and winter months, the Farmington Program provides seasonal wetland habitat for migratory birds.

The Monday event at SEWD headquarters served as a ribbon cutting ceremony to complete the \$2.4 million facility, which includes a 19-acre pond and three recharge basins, each totaling 35 acres. Annual recharge capabilities for the project are estimated at 7,000 acre-feet. The effort is the largest direct groundwater recharge program in the region since completion of the New Melones Reservoir water conveyance system in 1993.

Others presenting at the event were USACE Acting Sacramento Division Engineer Lt. Col. Mark W. Connelly, Assemblyperson Barbara Matthews, Sen. Michael Machado, Northeastern San Joaquin

County Groundwater Banking Authority Chairman Jack Sieglock, and SEWD Board President Tom McGurk. A certificate of recognition – signed by Assemblyman Alan Nakanishi and Sen. Charles Poochigian – for the Farmington Program was presented to McGurk by Nakanishi field representative Michael Babowal.

Connelly noted that the Farmington Program is a new generation of projects pursued by the Corps of Engineers.

“In the past, the Corps of Engineers focused most of its resources on design and construction of flood control projects. The Farmington Program is an example of where we are partnering with communities and water districts to completing their environmental infrastructure improvement projects,” Connelly said.

Matthews congratulated the Corps for its contribution to the program.

“Building water storage projects in harmony with agriculture and the environment is a complex task. I congratulate the Corps for its efforts and for adding this valuable layer of service to California,” Matthews said.

Machado, chair of the senate agriculture and water resources committee, said the Farmington Program is an example of structural projects that should be implemented in other regions of California.

“By the year 2020, the Central Valley is projected to have a two million acre-foot shortage of water,” Machado said. “The technology employed by the Farmington Program is proven and easily duplicated in other communities; however, California must embrace other, more complex water storage projects to satisfy future demand.”

Sieglock, who also serves as chair of the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors, said the Farmington Program is the beginning of several water storage programs as Eastern San Joaquin County water planners take control of their local water supply. This includes efforts to secure funding for the Mokelumne River Regional Water Storage and Conjunctive Use Project.

“This 60-acre facility is the first of several steps the Farmington Program,” McGurk said. “Groundwater is our future and through projects such as these, we will ensure the continued economic prosperity of our farms and communities.”

The Farmington Program is currently testing the recharge capabilities of San Joaquin Flood Control Agency’s Detention Basin No. 1 and is in the initial evaluation phase of five additional parcels. A tour of Detention Basin No. 1 was provided following the news conference.

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About the Program: The Farmington Groundwater Recharge Program is a \$33.5 million effort lead by Stockton East Water District in partnership with the Sacramento District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to contribute to restoration of the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Basin and to repel saline water intrusion. The Program seeks to rotate water with other land-uses via short- and long-term agreements with landowners, and may develop permanent recharge facilities. The Program goal is to spread an average of 35,000 acre-feet of water annually on 800 to 1,200 acres of land generally bound by Jack Tone Road on the east, Highway 99 to the west, the Mokelumne River in the north and Temple Creek in the south.