

RE: Water Resources and Development Act of 2022 Member's Day Testimony

I want to thank the Committee for the opportunity to participate in today's Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Member Day hearing. I write to respectfully urge the Committee to approve much-needed funding for California's Central Valley in this year's WRDA.

Specifically, I am requesting the Committee to approve an environmental infrastructure authority authorizing \$200M in spending over a lifetime for the region. Let me explain why this funding is desperately needed. My region—composed of Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties—is one of the most agriculturally rich areas of the world, but is also home to some of the poorest communities in our country. It's faced years of reduced federal investment compared to other parts of our state—for example, over the last twelve years, the Bay Area received nearly double the federal funding from competitive Department of Transportation grants as the Central Valley. This environmental infrastructure authority will begin to correct this funding disparity and support our local economy.

This authority would improve water infrastructure for many Black and Latino communities lacking the most basic features of a safe, healthy, sustainable neighborhood—potable drinking water, sewer systems, safe housing, public transportation, parks, sidewalks, and streetlights. To capture the scope of the issue, in Stanislaus County alone, \$50 million in American Rescue Plan funding is being used to connect some of these unincorporated areas, but there is still an estimated \$400 million needed to install sewer mainlines, potable water systems and storm drainage for just these areas—that doesn't even include the backlog of maintenance and upgrades for the rest of the county.

In addition to this lack of basic water infrastructure, the Central Valley is experiencing the worst megadrought in 1,200 years. This drought has caused water supply to be rationed—with many farmers following farms that have been in their families for generations. The economic impact and ripple effects of this drought in the Valley are estimated at [\\$1.7 billion in gross revenue losses](#), almost 15,000 full and part time jobs, and nearly \$1.1 billion in lost value added that could have been expected. By targeting federal investment to the Central Valley, we can mitigate the impact of future droughts on our nation's food supply and ensure that investment flows to the areas that need it most—rather than other areas in California.

I urge the Committee to include this new environmental infrastructure authority for Stanislaus and San Joaquin Counties in this year's WRDA bill, and thank you again for the opportunity to talk about this important issue.

Sincerely,



Josh Harder
Member of Congress