

The Sentinel

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LOCAL GUEST COMMENTARY

I'M FIGHTING FOR VALLEY WATER

Our Valley faces an epic crisis. It is not a new one. It has gone on a long time. It is the fight for the water we need for Valley survival.

And today, as never before, we must fight back. That's the course I take. I will continue to speak out.

My family farmed in Kings, Fresno and Tulare counties for generations. Water was our lifeblood. I first ran for office in part because I knew that without enough water, nothing in our Valley could survive — not crops, not our economy, not our way of life.

And that's why I have devoted most of my adult life to being the Valley's advocate in the water wars.

Here are a few things I have learned in that struggle.

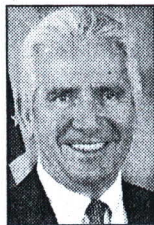
First and foremost, you must wage the fight on a daily, monthly and yearly basis. You never give up; you never surrender.

There will always be competition for our water. There will be those who are intent on strangling our Valley into extinction. No matter what we win today, there will be someone trying to take it away from us tomorrow.

When it comes to fighting for our Valley and our water, I take a backseat to no one.

So I address my first remarks to U.S. Interior Secretary Salazar.

As you know, Mr. Secretary, I have been working to get more water to our part of the Valley. Several of the pro-



Jim
Costa

fighting you on this.

My next comment is directly to Russell Waymire, a local Republican activist who falsely accuses me of voting against measures to "turn on the pumps." Mr. Waymire is entitled to his opinion of Democrats but not to make up things about my record.

The real facts are these: I voted for every legitimate measure in Congress that would actually pump more water to the Valley. That includes all four votes taken on Oct. 15 where the record clearly shows I voted with a bipartisan group of members from the Valley to force Congress to consider measures that would provide us with additional water.

Mr. Waymire got the votes and the date wrong in his letter. And last July, contrary to Mr. Waymire's letter, Congressman Nunes and I worked together on an amendment to turn on the pumps.

The issue here is Valley water and Valley survival, not politics. That is why I am working so hard for a bi-par-

posals I support could increase flows without harming the baitfish at the root of many of the environmental regulations choking off water supplies.

One is called two-gates. This January, you put a halt it. I believe your decision is wrong. I will continue

tisan, balanced and permanent solution that faces facts rather than relying on a flawed science.

It is why I publicly protested Secretary Salazar's recent announcement that shortchanges the Valley on this year's irrigation water allocation and why I voiced concern that President Obama's State of the Union address last week did not mention water at all.

It is also why I urged the Bush Administration in 2007 to help us overcome the court decision that was shutting down the pumps to protect the Delta smelt.

Since my election to Congress, I have met with everyone I could to bring us closer to real answers. I have protested the faulty "science" behind an environmental agenda that cuts off our water. I have testified against misguided policies that aggravate the drought in the name of tiny fish that are endangered by many things unrelated to water pumping.

In response to Secretary Salazar's recent water allocation announcement, I stated that we cannot tolerate arrogant decision-making that is either out of touch with reality, completely misinformed or trying to dupe us.

This is a fight for the survival of our Valley. I will continue to stand up and speak out against misguided policies that put Valley families in danger. I hope you will join me.