



For Immediate Release

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**CA Dept. of Water Resources:
Farmers Use Just Over 40% of State's Water**

The Environment Is California's Single Largest Consumer of Water, according to CDWR, Public Policy Institute of California & Northern California Water Association

SACRAMENTO (April 9, 2015) – Contrary to conventional wisdom, farmers account for only about 40 percent of the state's water use once the environment is factored into the equation, according to the California Water Alliance, citing objective data from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and other respected water experts.

The **environment receives 50.2% of California water** – nearly 40-million acre-feet – to manage wetlands, meet Delta, stream and river flows, according to DWR.

In contrast, the department found that **just 40.9% of water was allocated to farmers and 8.9% to urban residents.**

"Like all Californians, I care deeply about the environment, but state water policy should be made with the latest scientific metrics – not an old-fashioned model that conveniently ignores the environment's massive appetite for consuming California's water," said Aubrey Bettencourt, executive director of the California Water Alliance (CalWA).

"In an effort to demonize hardworking farmers and portray the environment as neglected, activists are waging a propaganda campaign that perpetuates the grossly misleading and disingenuous claim that farmers hoarding 80 percent of the state's water supply," she said. "That is simply not true."

Bettencourt cited two other highly credible sources that shatter the current myth about how California water is distributed;

- In its 2014 report, *Just the Facts: Water Use in California*, the highly respected Public Policy Institute of California substantiates the state figures with **50% of water going to the environment**, with just 40% to farmers and 10% for urban use.

- Another 2014 report, by the Northern California Water Foundation, placed **environmental uses for water at 49%**. It also found farmers receive 41% and urban users 10%.

Bettencourt said that the current confusion in water reporting stems in part from how DWR previously reported usage numbers.

“Historically, the California Department of Water Resources only reported on human water usage,” she said. “Under that scenario roughly 80 percent of water went to agriculture and 20 percent went to urban and industrial users.

“Upon establishment of their new reporting system (2007), urban, agricultural *and* environmental water mandates have been included.”

Omitting environmental figures may advance special-interest political agendas but does not reflect reality, she said. “It only serves to create a climate for scapegoating that undermines an honest discussion we should be having about how to achieve solutions that balance all three users: environment, farmers and urban residents.

Bettencourt said that any sincere debate on water allocation should include an understanding and review of the myriad mandates for water allocation earmarked for the environment.

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About the California Water Alliance

The California Water Alliance is a non-profit, non-partisan organization comprised of 4,000 members statewide that is dedicated to achieving both short-term relief and a long-term solution to the water emergency afflicting California. To this end, California Water Alliance supports the development of a water infrastructure bond that is comprehensive, and takes into account the needs of all Californians. To learn more, please visit www.californiawateralliance.org